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GEORGE HULL

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Welcome... to the opening credits



Hello all, how are you? This issue we've interviewed two heavyweights in film conceptual art: Michael Kutsche and George Hull. I could list their achievements in films here, but it would take me quite a while. Coincidentally, both of these artists were a part of ImagineFX early on in their careers (and

ours!), and it's thrilling to have them back in the mag to showcase the wonderful work they're both doing in Hollywood and beyond.

You'll also find very insightful advice from storyboard artist Jim Cornish. He's created the storyboards for Harry Potter, The Dark Knight and Bond films, so he's the perfect candidate to share his knowledge. As is Ben Mauro, an artist with another impressive film CV. His concept art tips start on page 70. A big thank you to Jana Schirmer and, of course, our brilliant cover artist Alex Garner, for sharing their art and advice with us, too.

On page 114 we speak to one of my favourite creature artists, Terryl Whitlatch. What I love about Terryl's interview is how many times she mentions she's learning something – a new skill, a technique gleaned from an artist she's studying. So, when you feel down about having so much to learn, don't be disheartened. Even our idols never stop learning. Instead – as Terryl says – make your mistakes your best teachers.

P.S. Memo to Elisabeth Alba, this month's Artist in Residence on page 24: can we swap views? My office desk overlooks a car park...

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
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*Our special cover for
subscribers this issue.*



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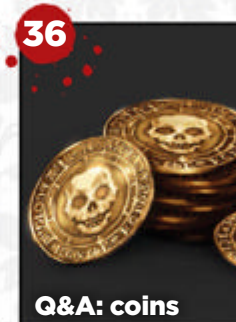
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Create a Star Wars illustration

FANTASY illustrator

Inspiration and advice from
the best traditional artists

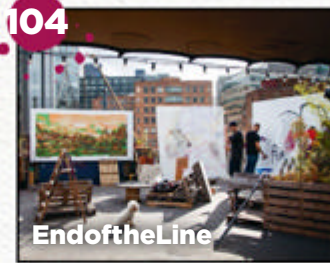
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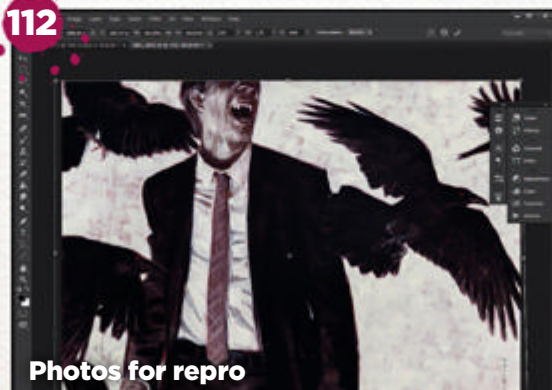
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EndoftheLine



Photos for repro



Terry Whitlatch



Acrylic wash



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Resources

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WORKSHOP VIDEO

Key advice for digital painting

Visual development artist Jason Scheier reveals his process for painting an environment.



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Search through the list of resources to watch or download.
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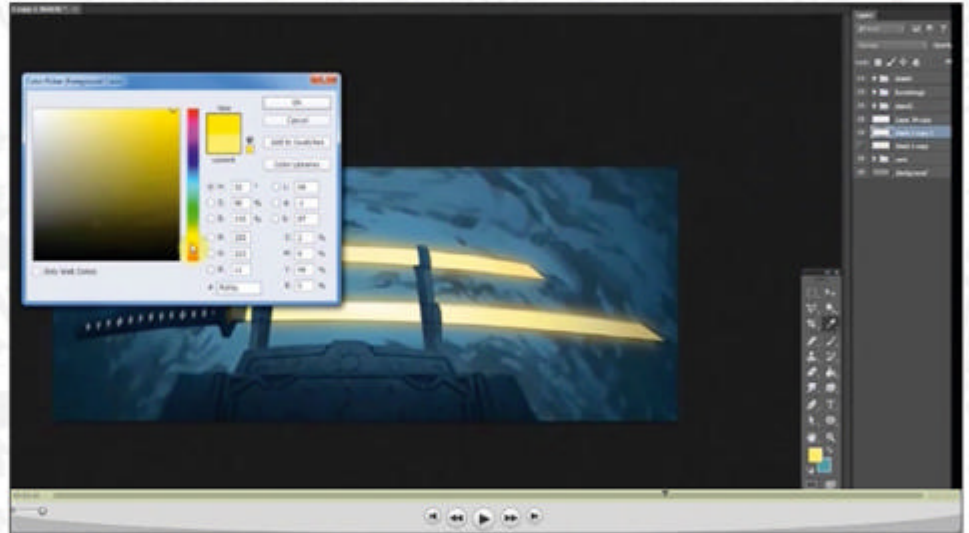
Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

Q&A VIDEOS



Tony Foti

Understand colour temperature, as well as value and light, to paint glowing heat. **Plus WIPs and final image**

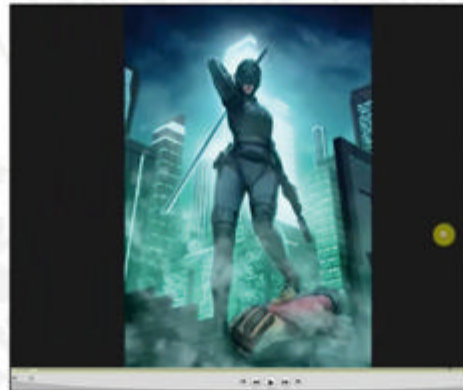


Q&A VIDEOS



Tony Foti

Learn how to toy with Opacity, use the Blender tool and consider upward motion, in order to paint realistic mist, fog and smog to enhance your art. **Plus WIPs and final image**



TRAINING



Patrick J Jones

The illustrator shares his anatomy methods to help you draw heads with confidence, in Anatomy of the Head Part 2.

DIGITAL-TUTORS VIDEO

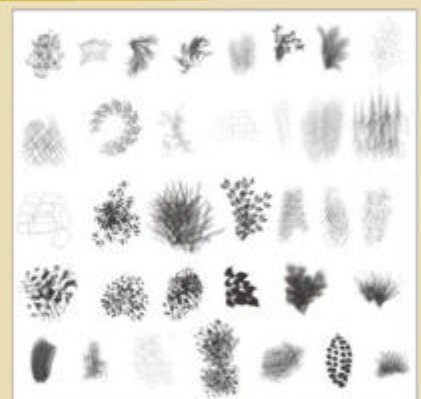


Composition for the Creative Artist

Watch a full video workshop from Digital-Tutors, which explains movement, balance, contrast, emphasis and many more core techniques to help you master composition. Plus, view all the accompanying Photoshop files! Learn more at www.digitaltutors.com.

AND ALL THIS! WIPs and finished art available to download, created by accomplished professional artists from around the world, including Paris Christou, Tyler Edlin, Alex Garner, Jana Schirmer and more.

51 CUSTOM BRUSHES



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Including 35 SketchBook Pro brushes from Nick Harris (www.nickillus.com).



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Tara Phillips

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MEDIA: Photoshop



More often than not, you'll find Tara hunched at her desk working on a digital portrait or two with a cup of tea and a soundtrack

playing in the background.

"I find inspiration from a lot of different areas," she says. "Photography, films, books, 18th and 19th century paintings, or even sometimes just from an adventure outdoors."

She started out as a traditional artist, but became captivated by the flexible world of tablets. The freelance illustrator loves to play with what she calls "natural supernaturalism" in her works, evoking the surreal, mystery, nostalgia and reflection through classical imagery.

1



1 THE TAXMAN "This was inspired by the TV series, True Detective. I really wanted to represent the dark and raw atmosphere of the show. I love double-exposure images, so it was great to add a similar aesthetic here. Oh, and as chaotic as all that foliage may look, it was actually quite relaxing to paint!"

2 BRÜNHILD "This is my contemporary spin on a shield maiden from Germanic mythology. I've always been drawn to feminine strength, and Brünhild's character and backstory seem to emulate just that. For the look and feel of the artwork, I wanted to capture her strength and intensity, but also channel the softness that you get in a lot of Renaissance portraits."



2



Artist crit

**Fantasy illustrator
Rebecca Guay is
excited by Tara's work**



"Tara is doing lovely work. Her True Detective piece is a strong cover or editorial concept full of complex emotion. Brünhild is my favourite – the surface textures and handling of everything are so well done."

1



2

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Piotr manages to catch a wonderful sense of history and mythology in his art – along with that elusive traditional feel. His environments, too, are really strong and the yapping dog really brings *Going To War* to life."

Alice Pattillo,
Staff Writer



Piotr Arendzikowski

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Piotr is an independent illustrator and concept artist living in Warsaw. He designs characters and illustrates for books, films and games, as well as creating his own non-commercial projects. He often uses themes related to history, fantasy and science fiction.

Winged Hussars are a reoccurring subject in his works. "They symbolise devotion and courage," he says.

Piotr takes inspiration from the Old Masters: Rembrandt, Jacek Malczewski and Józef Brandt. And he's collaborated with the likes of Platige Image, HEX Entertainment, Polish Digital Art, Sony Online Entertainment, Paizo and CI Games.



3



1 GOING TO WAR "Horsemen are ready for war, but first let's eat some apples! The idea was to paint a scene with experienced warriors in a peaceful village. I wanted to show the contrast between the subject and surroundings, as well as a little bit of storytelling."

2 CHARGE OF THE POLISH WINGED HUSSARS "This was the first piece of the set that pushed me to make the whole series. Inspired by the most lethal and unique cavalry unit in the 17th century. I wanted to achieve a feeling of movement with some sketchy effects in the background. I started this piece with just one Hussar, but it quickly evolved into a massive charge."

3 FORGOTTEN KING "Here's what can happen when kids are too curious about what's shining out there in the woods. This is based on a dream. After waking in the middle of night I started making some scribbles and notes. It quickly evolved into a sketch and, a couple of weeks later, a final piece."

Alice Bessoni

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Alice's artistic side began with writing. Drawing and painting came from the desire to see the characters she wrote and those she read about come to life.

"It's fascinating to look inside people's minds," she says, "and try to put that chaos and energy into a single piece of art."

Alice sees her work as a tale of two halves: "A lot of the commercial work I do is colourful, shiny, bright and exciting. In contrast, I find my personal work tends to be darker, more muted and raw. Fantasy and semi-realism seems to be the thread that binds them both together, and I'm quite happy to have this yin and yang."

1 STEALING SOULS "I painted this just for personal development, a long time ago. The idea was to depict how a shamanic creature is able to steal people's souls. Painting muscles and special effects is fun!"

2 NAMI FANART "One of my final projects while still at art school. It was extremely interesting and challenging to work on, trying to capture an existing design."

3 CAPTURE OF THE WIND "This was an illustration for a book cover by G&L Tomas. The idea behind this character was to try and portray the feeling of a powerful mermaid or siren with mystical powers."





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"What struck me instantly about Alice's art was her fabulous use of colour, but also the swirling shapes in all three images that really lure the viewer in – and of course, add that unmistakable sense of fantasy."

Beren Neale,
Commissioning Editor

Tawny Fritzinger

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Tawny's parents were extremely supportive of her art growing up. "I knew I wanted to do something with it," she says. "But I had no idea how to translate my skills into something I would enjoy. There weren't nearly as many resources for entertainment artists back then. So I set out to become a fantasy RPG artist."

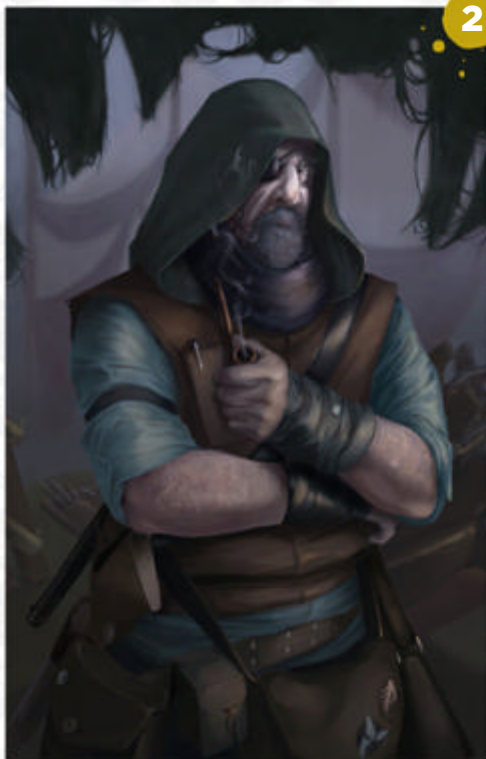
As an art school drop-out, having tried multiple degree plans at multiple schools, Tawny wouldn't call herself self-taught, rather 'community taught'. "I learned from workshops, tutorials, and YouTube videos put out there by other artists."

She hopes to someday be able to give back to up and coming artists by teaching them a thing or two!

1



2



1 SAUDADE "This started as a study of a stock image on DeviantArt by Marcus J Ranum. I put a little of myself into it - saudade is a Portuguese word that describes a deep emotional sense of nostalgia or melancholy."

2 GUN MERCHANT "Sometimes I like to be a little bit silly with serious subjects, and throw Easter eggs in an image. Like this guy's Star Trek emblems and Sharpie pen. They're hints that, while he looks like he's from the past, he's actually part of a dystopian future."

3 GARRUK "This was a Playmat commission for an avid Magic: The Gathering player. He wanted his favourite Planeswalker surrounded by fearsome beasts. I called on my mentor, Jon Schindehette, to help art direct me through this and I learned so much from it. Jon's a great resource!"

3



Richard Suwono

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Taking inspiration from 'Amerimanga', Richard's work is a combination of Japanese and American comic book styles.

"I love the exaggerated style of Street Fighter, and Capcom's Edyan," he says, "plus Alvin Lee and Joe Mad inspire my work greatly."

As well as this highly stylised game art, Richard loves realism, taking cues from mythology and various cultures to create depth in his more realistic paintings. He works in both digital and traditional forms. "I want to make people smile with my art," he says, "because it makes me happy."

1



1 QUEEN OF PAIN DOTA 2 "My take on the Queen of Pain from Dota 2. I find this character so alluring and interesting, I wanted to show both her deadliness and beauty in the piece - her sexiness is deadly! She can hold her own against the other heroes of the game."

2

2 I LOVE SAKURA! "I decided to illustrate my favourite character from Street Fighter, Sakura. I love this character so much I attempted my own version while trying out new styles. Sakura is so adorable, attractive and energetic - I wanted to capture her essence by portraying her signature move, Shunpukyaku."



3 WATCH AND LEARN "This illustration was for Blizzard's Hearthstone contest, Goblin and Gnome. It tells the story of a goblin who acquired a new gadget that could manipulate his gambling game so he won every time. The goblin became very rich and attracted fans. Here I've captured a gambling scene, taking inspiration from the Hearthstone game and the World of Warcraft universe."

3



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Andrew Theophilopoulos

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Canadian-born Andrew is attempting to redefine the legitimacy of digital art. His illustration and concept artwork strive to "come to life with a mystical sense of imagination and adventure, tinged with the classical aesthetic of the old masters."

The award-winning artist has worked in the film industry, had his work exhibited internationally and has even been commissioned to paint the portraits of some of the world's most influential politicians.

1 ABITBOL TRIPLETS "John Singer Sargent is one of my favourite painters and I composed this in his shadow, hoping to create a classical portrait. I snagged several fluffy costumes resembling a Sargent painting, posed my models and worked off a couple of photoshoots to capture the effect of twins interacting."

2 DOUBLE KILL "This was one of the first times I successfully used photo reference. I can't tell you how many awkward and strange things I've done to try and capture the perfect reference for an image. Though I've adopted a rule where I try not to kill any more friends for the sake of painting."

3 THE LEGEND OF TEMBO "It's 300BC and Tembo takes charge of his Chinese army, ready to fight to the death. Here's the last painting from my internship at Digital Domain FL - a turning point in my artistic journey. When the studio suddenly shut in 2012, 300 employees were forced to say goodbye to our little friend: Tembo, RIP"

4 SICK OF HIDING (TIGER) "This was the first painting of my thesis at Ringling College. I've remastered this illustration every year since 2011. I plan to continue playing with it as the years go on - stay tuned."

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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IMAGINEFX CRIT



"There's no denying Andrew knows a thing or two about creating a sense of drama in a scene. I love *The Legend of Tembo* and how clever use of the environment has added an extra sense of theatre."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS ImagineNation

DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY

Hugh Fleming became one of Dark Horse's most prolific cover artists in the 1990s, creating unique scenes taken from rare film production stills.





START YOUR ENGINES!

Find out how a bad case of boredom led Nicolas Bannister to paint movie and TV runabouts from the rear – and the positive response he received.

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ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

Elisabeth Alba loves sharing a home studio with her husband, though she says big windows are a mixed blessing when good weather taunts her...

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FAMILY TIE FIGHTERS

How Jeffrey Brown's lighter alternative take on a range of Star Wars relationships became a New York Times bestseller and Eisner Award winner.

Page 27

A NEW HOPE

Star struck We ask artists how the original Star Wars influenced them, and whether The Force Awakens will live up to their expectations or prove to be a disappointment of galactic proportions...

"A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away..." marked the introduction to an iconic franchise that's captivated the imaginations of millions, for generations. From the harsh deserts of Tatooine to the sinister Death Star, a fleet of X-wings to a motley collection of droids, it's fair to say that the imagery of Star Wars has shaped the world of science fiction since the release of Episode IV in 1977.

The struggle between Imperials and Rebels sparked a vision in thousands of artists, encouraging them to immerse themselves in creativity. Mike Mayhew illustrated the Star Wars miniseries for Dark Horse, and says the original trilogy really got his creative juices flowing: "What inspired me about the films was the amount of thought that went into designing every aspect of it. Nothing felt half-hearted." He point-blank declares his disappointment in the more recent series of prequels: "I was not a fan," he admits.



© Fantasy Flight Games & Lucasfilm Ltd

"I hope to see in Episode VII what I saw in the original film: something completely new"

Mike says that Episode VII: The Force Awakens has the opportunity to push the boat out when it comes to its in-universe technology and designs. "I hope to see in Episode VII what I saw in the original Star Wars: something completely new. I want to feel like I did the first time I saw a TIE fighter. Its spaceship design was unlike anything I'd ever come across."

Mike also hopes the film will strengthen its legacy with homages to sci-fi film history: "I want to see a movie that celebrates cinema. That's what Star Wars did so well. It displayed an acute awareness of what had come before, referencing everything from the Errol Flynn classic Adventures of



Hugh Fleming visualises the clash between Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker, as played out at different points in the Star Wars chronology.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

HUGH FLEMING

Learn how Hugh built his career around his passion for Star Wars

How did Star Wars influence your art style?

Tommy Jung's evocative Star Wars half-sheet was a billboard poster in my town and one of the very first glimpses I had of anything Star Wars. It sent my imagination into overdrive speculating about this new universe. The films themselves have inspired my visual style. Much of their success lies in their dedication to presenting a fantasy concept in as realistic a fashion as possible. I always strive for the same verisimilitude in my work.

Who's your favourite character to draw?

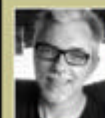
Luke, Han and Leia are equal favourites, because of my affection for their characters more than any specific facial qualities. Human emotion is more challenging to capture and more rewarding.

How did you land the job illustrating Star Wars comics?

I broke in when the field was somewhat less competitive for Star Wars artists; I was already established at Dark Horse through my Indiana Jones work just as the prequel hype was building, so I was very lucky to catch that wave.

Any tips for aspiring artists?

Put your best foot forward at convention portfolio reviews, take the criticism on the chin, listen to it, and work hard on your craft. If you're good and promote yourself as aggressively as possible, you'll get noticed; work diligently and you'll get hired. Don't expect to hit it big straight away, seek out lower-profile gigs with small publishers, be satisfied with less money, build your portfolio, learn how to meet deadlines and be passionate.



Hugh is a comic book illustrator who painted Star Wars and Indiana Jones cover art during the 1990s for Dark Horse.

Follow Hugh on Twitter: @ShuggyMF



Australian artist Hugh Fleming is known for his cinematic, photo-realistic poster art for the Star Wars comic series.



Carlos Valenzuela's portrait of Amidala references some iconic sci-fi characters.



Although he's possibly best known for his pin-up work, Carlos Valenzuela loves all the Star Wars universe, including the outrageous creatures. And Boba Fett.

➔ Robin Hood to Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey and incorporating them into a unique cinematic experience."

Freelance illustrator Tony Foti agrees: "In a lot of ways the original movie was a pastiche of what had come before. It raised the bar for the whole genre. The dedication to detail, creative use of shapes and that weathered, lived-in look are all things I've tried to incorporate into my art."



STRIKING BACK

Mike would also like to see some more mixed and challenging characters: "I think dark, haunted characters thrive in the Star Wars universe," he says. "I was always turned off by characters who seemed to pander to the lighter side or the younger audience."

As well as the characters, the reality of the films' world appeals to others, too. "I was

seven years old when I saw Star Wars for the first time. That day everything changed for me," says Carlos Valenzuela, a Star Wars mega-fan and current IDW cover artist for X-Files, "I loved all the designs, the ships, robots, landscapes. I remember drawing the X-wing fighters hundred of times!"



In the imminent feature, Carlos yearns for a strong story that deepens the Skywalkers' history: "The path of Luke becoming a senior Jedi Master would be interesting. I would love to see more Jedi training, as in The Empire Strikes Back - everyone learned so

Mike Mayhew enjoys depicting Star Wars' extended universe: "I try to treat every drawing I do as if it's going to be the best thing I've ever done."

much from the wisdom of Yoda. I don't want JJ Abrams to bring back every character from the original trilogy without justification. Hopefully the story will call for more Boba Fett!" Tony, on the other hand, yearns for Mark Hamill to ignite his lightsaber again!

Carlos isn't a big fan of CG effects, and hopes that the new flick won't go overboard with them. "I'd love the new film to use more practical effects instead of filling everything with neat CG. With the prequels, the core elements were there but they missed the retro feel - I think mainly because of the overuse of computer-generated effects."

Official Star Wars comics cover artist Hugh Fleming completely agrees with this



sentiment. "They can advance by going backwards toward a greater reliance on practical effects, building environments for actors to immerse themselves in and find the truth in their characters. Thankfully they're going in precisely that direction. I'm in two minds about the new Stormtrooper design, but real performers in real suits go a long way to selling me on them."

With JJ Abrams at the helm, the sequel is being given the benefit of the doubt. In his capable hands, 2009's Star Trek reboot was brought back to the big screen to universal

“In the prequels, the core elements were there but they missed the retro feel”



Carlos recreates the excitement of the original film and its cast of unforgettable characters.



Han Solo prepares to make the jump to light speed, in Tony Foti's art for Star Wars: The Card Game.

acclaim – and with fans perhaps even more zealous than those of Star Wars, this was a great achievement.

Carlos is very excited to see JJ's direction: "I trust completely in Abrams' vision. I love that special 'retro feel' that some of his movies have, particularly in *Super 8*. And it helps that he's a big fan."

JJ'S NO JAR JAR

Mike also has high hopes: "JJ Abrams is about as capable as anyone. I have a lot of confidence in him. I think the new Star Wars will benefit from the association with Disney and Marvel as well. I think Marvel Studios has shown the world a thing or two about how to make thrilling, serialised action/adventure movies. I get the impression that this is setting the bar higher for Star Wars, and I think that's a good thing."

Hugh is a little more dubious: "I've upheld a tradition – since maybe 1982 – of having bad dreams about anticipated sequels to favourite movies. I had one a few months back where I was at the premiere screening of Episode VII. The film was set in the modern day, there was no action in it whatsoever and no characters I recognised. Everyone wore Star Trek costumes and it was set in a Costco parking lot. So, yes, safe to say I do harbour deep-seated, fanboy anxieties about how this

Carlos Valenzuela hopes to someday become an official Star Wars artist and produces numerous pieces of expertly crafted fan art.

one's gonna go." The acclaimed Australian illustrator is looking for "just a straightforward swashbuckler with human, relatable characters, and hopefully a few fresh plot ideas – please, no Death Star 3!"

Tony has another point of view. He thinks adding to the wider universe is never a bad thing: "Even if the new films were the worst ever (and I'm positive they won't be), it's not like it would somehow ruin the original three.

"Star Wars has become a living story that every generation is adding on to," Tony continues. "By the release of the first movie, George Lucas was already planning for it to be a James Bond-type franchise, where different film makers would add their own facets to the mythology. Some parts will be great, others not so much, but I think the good bits will always be worth the duds."

We'll find out more on 18 December...



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BannCars take the high road

Exhausting work Nicolas Bannister's idiosyncratic poster series has caused virtual gridlock online

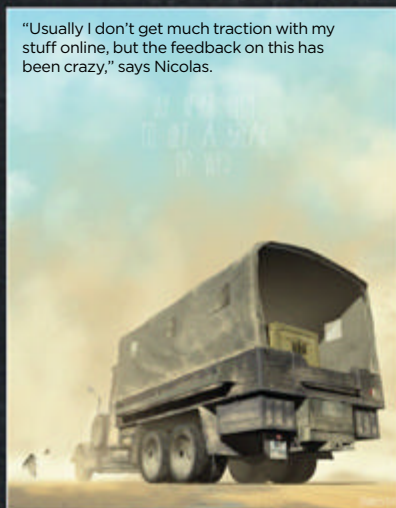


A bad case of boredom got Nicolas Bannister sketching. "I decided to do what I usually do when I'm bored – a fake movie poster," he

says. "It ended up being just a car with a character and a punchline on top."

But what grew out of idle doodles has been fuelled by online onlookers and

"Usually I don't get much traction with my stuff online, but the feedback on this has been crazy," says Nicolas.



spawned a series of iconic movie cars.

The BannCars series is a union of Nicolas's passions: film, graphic design and cinematic vehicles. "I like it when a car has been designed specifically for a real purpose in the story, when it's a character," he says.

The French illustrator says he settled on the unusual rear view because it's rarely shown, except in car chases. "I love that low angle, very close to the ground. I thought why not try to see if a famous TV or movie car can be recognisable from behind?" The view also poses a challenge for the viewer. "It works for some, not for others."

As well as art requests, the artist's been approached for jobs, exhibitions and more. Miramax featured his incarnation of Kill Bill's Pussy Wagon on its Facebook page, and he's received ACME commissions for Star Wars' Millennium Falcon and Futurama's Planet Express ship. But he doesn't plan to paint spacecrafts. "It would just open the door to insanity – there are so many!"

See more of Nicolas's BannCar art at www.facebook.com/banncars.

Here's Nicolas's Akira poster, featuring the distinctive bike ridden by the character Kaneda.



As well as this take on *Duel*, Nicolas has illustrated other iconic, transport-focused features such as *Speed* and *Knight Rider*.

“I love that low angle, very close to the ground. I thought, why not see if a famous TV or movie car is recognisable from behind?”





These sheets of paper block the sun out of my eyes as it travels. Ugly but necessary.

Snow! I love having windows for occasional refreshing gazing. In bad weather, they serve as a reminder that I'm warm, comfy and working from home! Though in good weather the view taunts me.



My daily routine includes these books: One Sketch A Day and One Line A Day: A Five-Year Memory Book.

Elisabeth Alba

Happy medium The illustrator on painting a full tarot deck and the joys of sharing a home studio space with her husband



Our studio is located on our covered porch. My husband, Scott Murphy, is also an illustrator and he works right behind me. Since moving in together in 2010, we've always worked back to back.

Before we moved to our new home in Massachusetts last October, we lived in New York City and our tiny studio was also our bedroom. Now we're in a bigger space with lots of light. We fortunately don't get sick of each other, and I'm actually much more productive when he's around.

As a freelance illustrator I make my own time, but I still try to maintain a 'normal' schedule. During the average work day, we wake up at 8:30am (it's a struggle to wake up earlier) and go to bed around 1:30am.

The first thing we do is make a big breakfast. I also check my email and various social media in the morning, and I've just started drawing in a One Sketch A Day book, so that gets me warmed up.

From 11am to around 6pm I work in my studio on various projects. Right now I'm illustrating a tarot deck for Llewellyn Worldwide, so I'm either sketching, inking or

painting images – or making time for a personal piece or other commissions.

I love my studio arrangement. It's in a corner and I'm surrounded by windows. I have plenty of room for my traditional art set-up and my digital set-up, because I sometimes work digitally.

We usually exercise before dinner, using a workout DVD. Then it's back to work! I continue until 9 or 10pm. Then I need to relax before bed, with TV, a book or a film.

Elisabeth is a freelance illustrator living in western Massachusetts. You can see her work at www.albailustration.com.



This sword was one of our best buys. We use it all the time for reference photos. And it's battle ready!

A small selection of our beloved books. These are mostly children's books and graphic novels.



Scott works behind me. He has a computer and a digital work station, and his drafting table for oil painting. He has more wall space than me to hang inspiring prints and postcards.

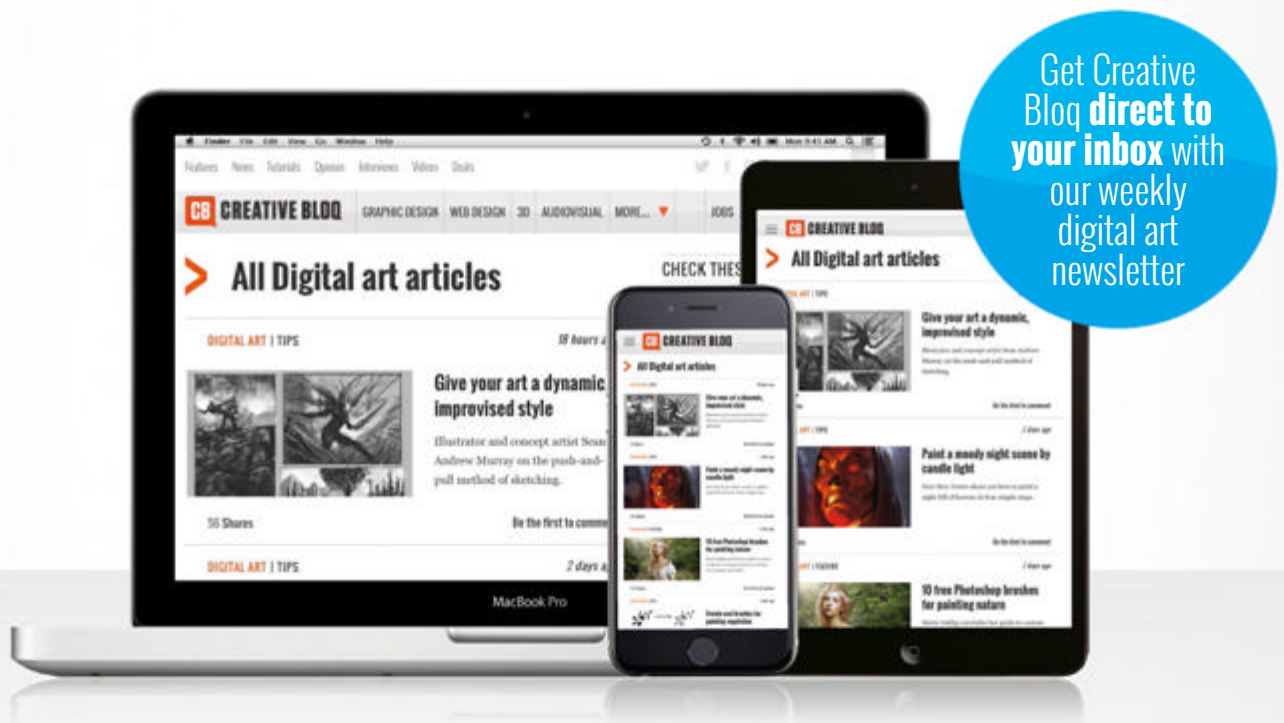


We like collecting interesting things and sometimes our bits and bobs make it into our artwork. For example Scott uses these animal skulls all the time as reference material.



These are some of the materials I work with, including Dr Ph Martin's Hydrus liquid watercolours, Holbein Acryla gouache and Prismacolor pencils.

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Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Parental advice, Sith style

The one where... Jeffrey Brown brings out another part in his Darth Vader series – this time exploring friendships in the Star Wars saga



In 2012, Jeffrey Brown released *Darth Vader and Son*, an adorable illustrated story featuring the Sith Lord and Luke Skywalker. The

book became a *New York Times* bestseller and a big winner at the Eisner Awards.

Jeffrey published *Vader's Little Princess* in 2013, and *Goodnight Darth Vader* in 2014. This year, *Darth Vader and Friends* features more of our favourite Star Wars characters.

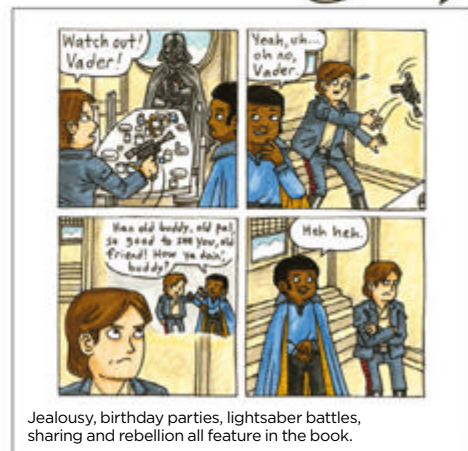
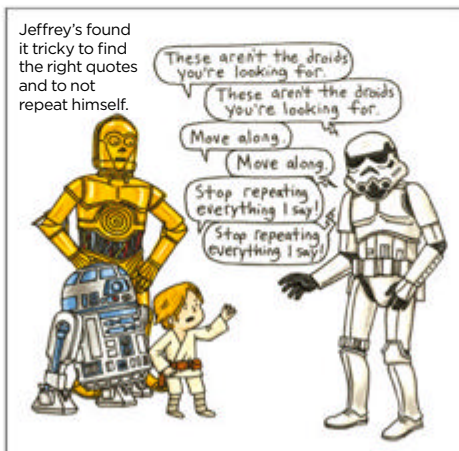
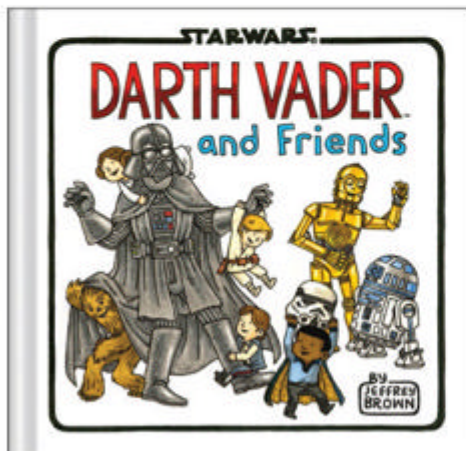
"The idea began with thinking on C-3PO and R2-D2 (with a working title of

LOLC3POR2D2BFF), and then I thought of all the other best friends I could write about, from Han and Chewie to Vader and the Emperor," says Jeffrey. "What I never anticipated was how much kids would like the books, and everyone from hardcore Star Wars fans to people who never even saw the films," he continues.

Naturally, *Darth Vader and Friends* is published on May 4th, and is the perfect way to get excited about Episode VII. Visit

<http://jeffreymbrowncomics.blogspot.co.uk> to learn more about Jeffrey's latest book.

Drawing Star Wars material was one of Jeffrey's dream jobs as a child.



Jealousy, birthday parties, lightsaber battles, sharing and rebellion all feature in the book.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England



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Gender imbalance

I'm writing in response to a letter published in issue 120, titled ImagineFX Inequality. Part of me is deeply disappointed in Claire's response to this letter. But I also think I understand what influenced that response.

I believe Claire wanted to be the voice of neutrality and the issue of gender imbalance in the magazine is entirely unintentional. However, the statement, "Perhaps men are simply better at promoting themselves online," is troubling. It carries the same underlying subtext as the argument used to justify the continuing pay gaps between men and women. It both points to and ignores the structural issues of a culture that makes it harder for talented women to get the same opportunities for advancement as talented men.

Men do tend to be better at promoting themselves, online and offline, because psychologically men tend to be more comfortable directing attention to things they think they've done well. Women, meanwhile, through a complex web of cultural cues and conditioning are taught to be modest, quiet and unassertive. (How often is the word "bitch" just a synonym for an assertive woman?) So really, it becomes a situation where "neutrality" tends to be biased toward favouring men.

It's sort of like putting one colour next to another: you might have had a perfect blue to start with, but now it's next to something else, it's starting to look more like green. Since you want to keep a true blue, you fiddle with the balance until the colour next to your green looks like true blue – but outside of that context, the blue isn't true at all. Similarly, in trying to stay neutral, you have inadvertently shortchanged female artists.

K Moore, via email

Claire replies Thanks for your email, K. I am all too aware of the issues women face in work and life. Also, as a team we have thought long and hard about Charlotte's



A letter from issue 120 on gender imbalance has provoked a welcome debate on women in art.



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 121?

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letters. In the short space I had to reply, I wasn't trying to be neutral, or indeed state that I'm happy with this (how could I be?). Rather, the simple fact is that when I look for artists, there are far many more men than women. This is clearly an important issue for our industry and we're going to examine the topic of women in art and the differences they face compared to men in our next edition. I'm sure it's going to be an interesting debate and an informative read.

Broaden the talent base

I was deeply upset by your response to the reader, Charlotte Ahlgren. I, too, had noticed that more male artists than female are consistently represented – though that's so standard, no matter where you look, that I took it for granted. She had a valid point, and I was appalled at the dismissive response that was tantamount to: "We go by talent, so maybe the male artists are just better?" That might not be what you intended, but that was the undeniable subtext. And this is indicative of exactly the kind of attitude that promotes and supports inequality in these industries.

In answer to your answer, couldn't that be exactly the mindset that discourages female art students from pursuing these careers? I agree with Charlotte that ImagineFX should be seeking to broaden the talent base (isn't that the whole point?), rather than restrict it by catering to a narrow band of predominantly male artists and readers.

And as a side note, whenever you're ready to do that all-female issue, consider me eager to be chosen as a contributor.

Melissa, via email

Claire replies Melissa, in no way did I say that male artists are better, so for you to imply that I am sexist has greatly upset me. Both you, I and all women not only operate in a male-dominated industry, but a male-dominated world. I'm not happy that there is inequality in any industry. However, I do believe that my editorship at ImagineFX can go towards redressing the balance. Even the simple fact that we're having this debate will have a positive impact.

Judge art on its quality

I read your answer to the letter on perceived gender inequality and I must say you dealt with this subject with mastery. I totally agree with you that art must not be chosen by gender, race, nationality, or anything else but its quality. That itself is the most equal thing you can do, and a great motivation for all the featured artists and the rest of us, who know that if we become good enough, we can aspire to be featured as well.

Hernan Gajardo, via email

Claire replies Thanks Hernan. We've had a varied response about this particular issue. I'd love to hear your views, readers.



Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Iwan Ruby
[@iwanrubys](https://twitter.com/iwanrubys)

"Purple centaur with @DarkHorseComics cc @imaginefx Photoshop #centaur #comics #sketch"



Joshua Whitehouse
[@JowlyBean](https://twitter.com/JowlyBean)

"Thanks to @imaginefx I have gained more confidence to improve and create the worlds I always imagined #artists"



Dawn Cruttenden
[@dawncruttenden](https://twitter.com/dawncruttenden)

"@imaginefx another fairy arrived late last night with the help of midnight oil and a 2H pencil"



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Artist Q&A

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The
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
panel

Paul Canavan
Paul is the lead artist at Scottish indie game studio Blazing Griffin and a freelance illustrator. His work has featured in numerous games, films and books.
www.paulscottcanavan.com

Mark Molnar
Mark works as a concept and visual development artist in the entertainment industry, creating artwork for international film, game and animation companies.
www.markmolnar.com

Dave Braggalla
Dave is a busy graphic designer and illustrator from Stockholm who works both digitally and traditionally. He's produced film concept art and matte paintings.
www.pixelhuset.se

Tony Foti
Tony is a freelance illustrator who regularly contributes to Dungeons & Dragons and Fantasy Flight Games' Star Wars, The Lord of the Rings, and Call of Cthulhu lines.
www.tonyfotiart.com

Bram Sels
Bram is a freelance Illustrator and concept artist from Belgium. He's been working in the entertainment industry for over two years, mainly for the Belgian game developer Grin.
www.artofboco.com

Question

I want to draw someone getting pulled sharply in one direction. How should I achieve this?

Tina Wright, US

Answer

Dave replies



When yanking your character about in an action scene, consider the physics of the situation and how it affects the human body. Arms and legs will fly and flap about, and their positions can be used to highlight the motion you want to convey. When people stumble or fall, they'll often make frantic motions to try to correct their balance. Capturing some of that desperation will add that energy to your image.

Always watch those air ducts! These three spaceship crewmen risk their lives to demonstrate possible solutions for having a character pulled quickly in different directions.

A recent spate of Alien franchise discussions inspire this whimsical space monster scene. I want to examine three varied poses, with each one being created by an external force pulling on the figure. I make these up out of my head, so they're a bit loose, but such as exercise is excellent for teaching yourself how to make this kind of pose convincing. Try sketching a lot of these, and don't worry – there's always more brave spacemen where these came from!



Bedridden at home with no Wacom or scanner access, I ink my drawings and captured them with the iPad's camera – a handy and quick solution.



Artist's secret

PROP 'EM UP!

I've used several props in this image. Having characters losing their grips on their prop weapons helps me convey the violence and direction of the motions. Create a visual trail of related objects behind your moving figure to push the action.

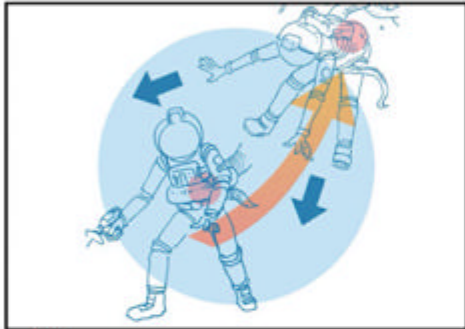
Artist Q&A

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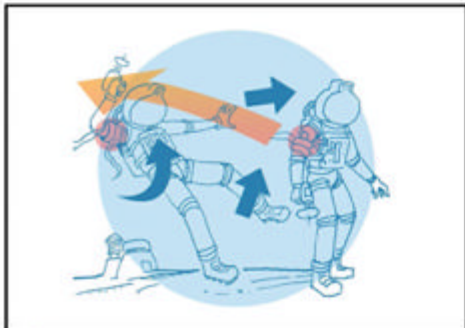
Email help@imaginefx.com with your art questions and we'll provide all the answers!



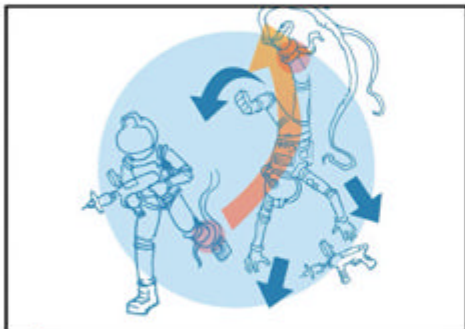
Step-by-step: Jerk your characters around dramatically



1 This astronaut is being yanked straight up off the ground by a tentacle around his waist. He's bent double, and his legs are straight. His arms are hanging down and splayed out a bit, so that his arms and legs become "arrows" highlighting the direction in which he's being pulled. The lost weapon enhances the feeling of upward movement.



2 The alien's grip on this astronaut's upper arm is pulling him back. He becomes off-balance, and throws the other arm outwards to try to regain it. The right forearm is jerked upwards, spoiling any controlled shot. The left leg scissors up as the figure falls back, and the head is tilted slightly forward in a bit of whiplash effect.



3 One poor chap is being hoisted upside down by the left ankle. The arms hang almost straight down (reaching for the ground can enhance the feel of the pose) and the right leg is folding down with gravity as well, causing the body to arc back. Again, a lost weapon emphasises the idea of being lifted sharply and suddenly.

Question

What are some of the different ways to use masking techniques in digital painting?

Russ Bomford, England



Various masking methods help me to separate the most important parts in my paintings. Here I use them to paint the background and the character separately.

I place a Clipping mask inside the silhouette of my figure (top image), and then apply a Layer mask to my adjustment layer to only affect parts of my image.



Answer Mark replies



There are various options for masking in Photoshop, with Layer, Vector and Clipping masks being the most common. These non-destructive

techniques make it easy to apply changes to your painted elements. I often use the Clipping and Layer masks, because they're both bitmap (pixel) based, which is the same as my paintings.

You can create a Clipping mask from any layer by holding down Alt (Option on older Macs), and by clicking between two layers you can link the two. This means anything painted on the second layer or sub-layer will only appear if there's pixel information on your main layer. This can be helpful if, for example, you're working with silhouettes. You can easily create a silhouette

on one layer and paint only inside that silhouette on multiple sublayers, without having to lock the painted information on your main layer.

I use Layer masks when applying textures or other photo-based elements to my art, because I'm able to mask out part of the image without deleting anything. You can apply a Layer mask to your active layer or folder by clicking the Layer mask icon at the bottom of your layer palette.

Best of all, a Layer mask works with the complete range of grey values from black to white, where white is fully transparent and black is fully masked. This enables you to play around with various Opacity levels inside the same mask, even creating smooth gradients, which is perfect for masking adjustment layers.

Question

My environments always seem flat. How can I give them more depth?

Miriam Halstram, Canada

Answer

Paul replies



There are a few key techniques that'll help you to create believable environments, such as atmospheric perspective, repeated shapes and using light to help create 3D forms.

Atmospheric perspective is a technique used to mimic the way distant objects are affected by the Earth's atmosphere. Find some landscape photographs and notice

how mountains in the distance become blue/grey and less defined. Recreating this haze will help your mid- and foreground to feel distinct.

Use of repeated shapes is one of the easiest ways to demonstrate the scale and distance of an image. Human figures are particularly helpful here, because the viewer will understand how large objects are in relation to a human being. Try



In this value study, elements close to the camera have higher contrast and are darker than the background.

adding figures throughout your painting and scale them appropriately. You can use a perspective grid to make this easier.

An understanding of light and shadow is going to help you out when it comes to rendering forms. I use photo reference for my environments, paying specific attention to how light lands on rocks or mountains. You can never study too much.

There are lots of other great techniques to learn such as layering objects, adding mist to separate forms and understanding where to add texture and where to hold back, but the three I've described here will serve as a solid base to start learning!



Distant islands become bluer and less defined, while repeated waterfalls imply distance. I study rocks to help with the island rendering.

Artist's secret

UNDERSTANDING VALUES

A good environment should read perfectly as a greyscale image. Often distant objects become lighter while the more saturated foreground is darker, with a range of values in between. This isn't always the case, but it's a solid starting point.

Question

How can I stay true to a light source when painting elements in a scene?

Jasper Hassard, US

Answer

Mark replies



You'll need to bear in mind three key factors. These are the surfaces lit by the light, the core shadows that appear on the objects in the surrounding areas, and the cast shadows of various objects.

All the surfaces that face the light source will be lit, but the strength and saturation of the illuminated surfaces will drop the further away they are from the light. Core shadows appear on the faces of the objects facing away from the light source.

It's important that your shadows are cast correctly. You can make this process

easier by creating extra one-point perspective grids, with your light sources at the centre. If you're working with a more complex environment, you can transform the grid you created for your lights on to the perspective planes to make them even more accurate.

You can also strengthen the realism of your painting by adding reflected lights to the darker side of your objects. The colour of these lights will be a mix of your light source and the environment around your object, which will help to integrate your objects into the environment.



Notice how the light affects the surroundings and how it creates lit surfaces and shadows.

Question

Please help me paint the glow of heat around an exceptionally hot object

Flo Randall, US



This final composition combines the contrast in colour temperature (warm orange on cool blue); value (bright swords on dark background); and bounce light.

Answer

Tony replies



There are a few things to consider first when painting a glowing object. If heat is a goal of yours, then take advantage of colour temperature.

The whole concept of colour temperature is based on how hot or cold a hue feels, and when you put a warm colour in front of a cool one the contrast alone can heat things up. Not only that, but it also gives you a definite focal point. Half the colour wheel is generally considered warm (orange, red and yellow), while their complements (blue, green and violet) are cool.

Beyond colour, you'll want to focus on value and light. Anything that's glowing will probably be high in value (how light or dark it is) and giving off light. If your glowing object is a colour

that has a low intrinsic value (indigo, for example, is naturally very dark) then I suggest painting the hottest parts with something higher in value but still saturated (like a bright electric blue) so you don't take all the vibrancy out. The colour gradation looks great, too.

To achieve that soft glow effect I prefer to duplicate the layer I'm working on, place it

I use a rough brush to in paint some light texture in and around the glow of the blade, just to add a little more interest.

below the main one, and then use Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Adjusting the strength of the blur effect will increase the size of the halo. You can also paint the light that's bouncing off of any nearby objects, such as the sword stand (pictured above). Be careful, though, because the drop-off for that sort of glow is pretty severe and doesn't travel very far.



Artist's secret

GLOW IN THE DARK



If you want something to glow in your image, don't make the background too bright. This may seem obvious, but how much the glow stands out is largely based on how dark everything is around it.

Step-by-step: Blocking in your light sources



1 The sky is my main light source. It'll affect the whole lighting scheme, the overall colour scheme and mood of the scene that I'm painting. I want to use only one light source and so I imagine a scene after sunset, which leaves the foreground without almost any natural light.



2 I darken the environment using a Levels adjustment layer and add a mid-tone orange colour on an Overlay layer. Then I introduce my fire on a Screen layer to the scene and erase back the layer mask on the Adjustment layer at the surfaces, where the light affects the environment.



3 I create an extra one-point perspective grid, where the mid-point meets my light source (the fire). This helps to see how the fire affects its surrounding and what direction the firelight takes. This enables me to paint accurate cast shadows on the ground, caused by the added rubble.

Question

I need to make a painting of gold coins more realistic. Can you help?

Fred Reed, England

Answer

Bram replies

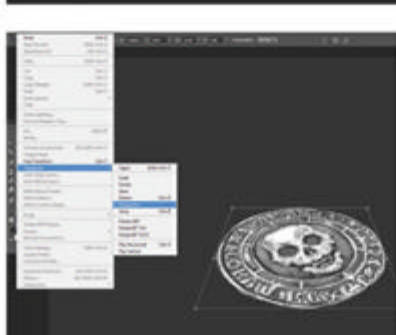


The key to creating a convincing gold texture is in the values. When I'm painting different materials I always look out for photo reference to help me out. Studying how light reacts differently on various materials is crucial when you want to recreate them yourself.

In case of the pirate gold I'm painting here, which is a more rugged and older variety, the nooks and crannies will be darker and dirtier than in new gold coins. I usually start out in black/white to make sure to get my values right. I'll be boosting the shadows and the highlights later, but right now it's important that the design of the coin itself and the stack they're put in looks good.

Once I'm satisfied I click Image> Adjustments>Gradient Map. A Gradient Map replaces your values with a gradient, so here I'm creating a gradient where the highlights are a bright yellow, and the darks a warm brown. Notice how there's a big falloff, so the light will be really bright in the highlights, but it quickly falls away becoming dark in the crevices. Introducing big contrasts like this is the key to creating convincing gold. To work, alchemists!

When you're painting materials such as gold, it's a good idea to look for reference. It helps you to get values and corresponding colours just right.



Creating different coins is easy with the Perspective and Distort tools. You'll have a heap of coins in no time!

Artist's secret

FROM 2D TO 3D

An easy trick to design coins is to paint the top of just one, duplicate it, and put it in perspective with Distort. You can quickly turn a top view around to create a more random-looking stack, instead of having to paint several coins laying in different directions.

Step-by-step: Here be pirate gold!



1 Start the task by finalising the design of the coin itself. Wikimedia Commons is a great resource to study what old coins looked like. The benefit of designing a coin from the top-down view is that you can easily use Photoshop's tools to both copy and mirror parts, and rotate details using the Elliptical Marquee Tool, without having to take perspective into consideration.



2 Once you're happy with your coin's look, duplicate it a few times, rotate it around and put it in perspective using the Distort tool. Of course, your coin will look flat when you do this, so each time you've put a coin in perspective don't forget to make it thick by painting the border. Think about the ground shadows too, which will help to make your coins feel grounded.



3 Now merge all the coins together (Ctrl+E) and click Image>Adjustments>Gradient Map. Create a new gradient and carefully pick colours so that you gradually build your values from bright yellow, to warm saturated oranges, to dark browns. Look at your coins while you're doing this, and move the colour sliders in the Gradient editor to keep your values in check.



4 Make your gold coins shine by adding a new layer on top, changing its blending mode to Color Dodge and using a warm orange to boost the highlights in random spots. It helps to go outside the borders of your coins layer - that way the shine will really make the coins pop. Not all coins will be facing the light directly, so some coins can be darker than others.

Question

What's a simple method of painting mist, fog and smog?

Thomas Brewer, England



Smoke, mist and fog can be used to add interest to a previously dull area, and the shape and texture can – and should – be chosen based on your specific needs.



Answer

Tony replies



Mist has the ability to soften everything in an image, adding a calm, mysterious or magical element. The plumes that rise up with thick smoke have a lot of form and texture, which add excitement and move the viewer's eyes around. Spend some time looking at photos of each before you start painting anything.

For plumes of smoke, I suggest working with several layers in Photoshop. Adjusting the Opacity of each layer gives you control over its density, and enables you to either emphasise or knock back the texture in a given area. Starting with a rough-edged brush at a low Opacity (around 30), paint in the shape you'd like the smoke to take. You may notice that the edges of smoke can be both soft and complex, with lots of tiny

little twists, turns and hard edges. Use the Blender tool to smooth things out, orchestrating the hard and soft edges based on how natural you want it to be. I'd also suggest using a somewhat rough brush, such as number 14 or 39 for the blending.



Question

What tips do you have on quickly painting reflections?

Wade Gallagher, US



Concept artists regularly use the Copy Merge function to quickly paint reflections when they want to imply wet surfaces.

Answer

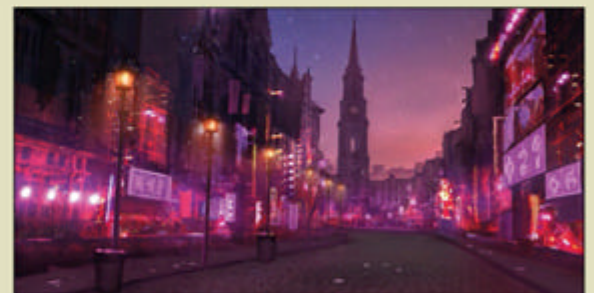
Bram replies



Copy Merged is my number one Photoshop tool for painting reflections. When producing concept art it's great for several reasons, the main one being it's quick and accurate. The idea behind Copy Merged is that you copy a part of your painting, mirror it vertically and then erase parts of it.

So knowing that, it's important that you first focus on the part of your image that doesn't contain any reflections. A scene with bright lights works best for this, because the reflection will give an extra boost to it. In this case I paint a bright, neon-lit street with lots of orange, red and pink lights. To make the reflection a bit more logical and convincing I also paint in a hint of rain. Once I feel the scene is done, I select the left part of the image first, hit Ctrl+Shift+C to Copy Merge, then press Ctrl+V and mirror the new layer vertically to put it right below the line of buildings.

Keep in mind that even reflections follow the rules of perspective, so use the Distort tool to push the layer towards the vanishing point. The reason for selecting the left side first is that the right side will have to be distorted in the opposite way. So repeat the same process for the right side. Finally, erase little parts of it to make the reflection more random.



It's best to leave the reflective surfaces until the end – you'll need the values and colours from the rest of the scene to copy into them.

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Question

What are some simple rules of colour dictating mood, and how can I apply them to my environments?

Ron McCoist, Australia

Answer

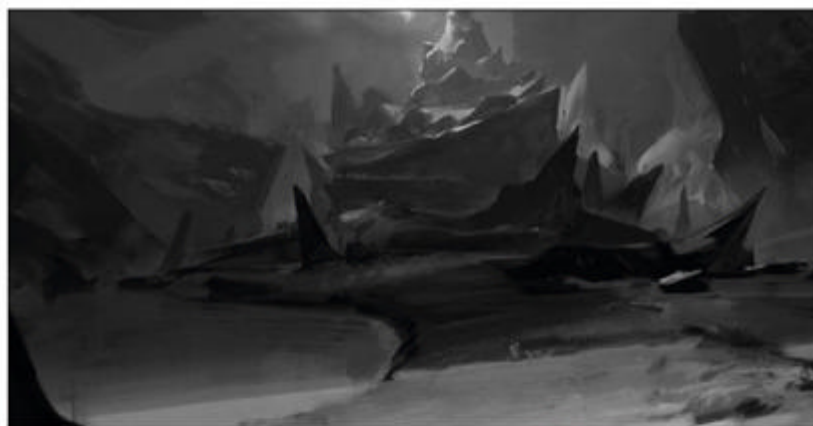
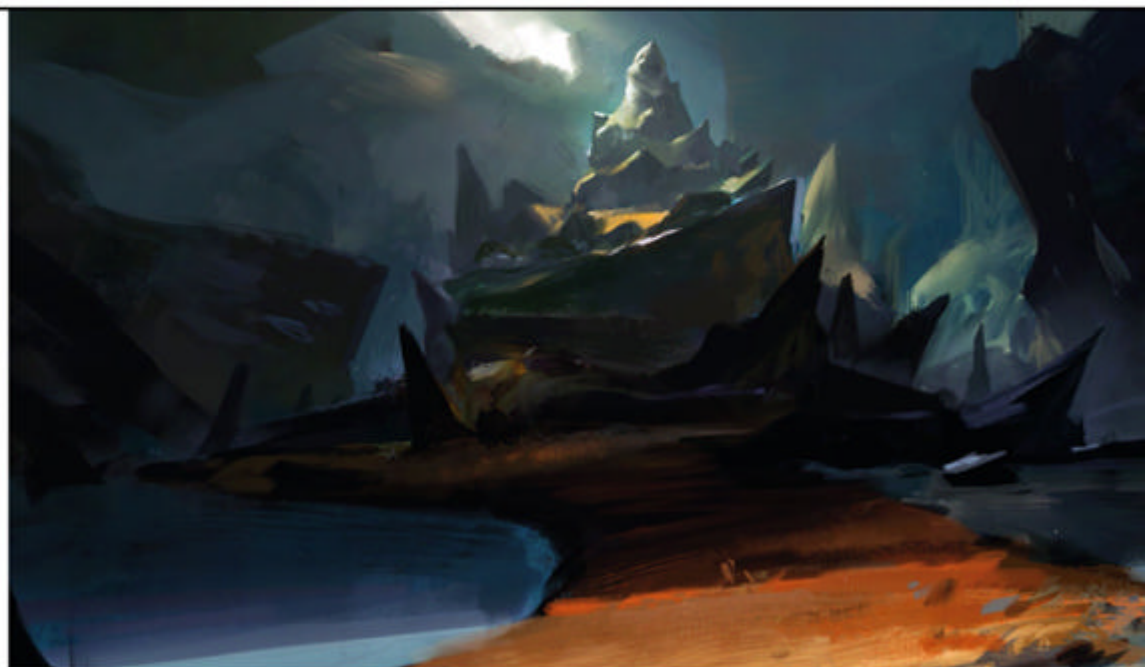
Paul replies



Colour theory is one of those topics that seems daunting at first. Yet if you want to create powerful images, it's useful to at least have a basic understanding of how colour works and how we perceive it. The palette you choose to use in a scene tells the viewer a lot about the story you're telling, from the overall mood to the way the world you're designing actually functions.

There are several common colour schemes and they're all simple to learn. In fact, I usually only use three variations. Complementary colour palettes use two colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel; often the complementary colours are warm and cold, which makes them ideal for highlighting characters or places of interest. Monochromatic palettes just use one key colour; they're perfect for moody environments because people immediately understand that a blue environment is cold and a red one is hot. Finally, analogous colour schemes involve a key colour and two colours touching it on the colour wheel. This scheme gives a similar effect to the monochromatic palette with a little more variation.

For my answer here I'll start by painting an environment using a simple complementary palette. I'm using blue and orange (cold and warm), one of the most common schemes, to create an interesting setting with no specific mood. From here I can start making adjustments to see what other stories can be told.



This environment looks interesting to explore, but isn't telling us a specific story. We can change this by using a stronger palette.

Solid values are important for colour balancing: you want a broad range of tones, but try not to go to full black or white.

Step-by-step: Changing the mood

1 Let's start with a hot monochromatic palette. Here I've taken my original painting and colour balanced it to a hot red hue using the Hue/Saturation and Color Balance tools. To sell the change it's



worth adding a few additional details, in this case lava, some heat haze painted with a Soft brush and some embers! Now it feels aggressive and scary.

2 Next up is another monochromatic palette from the opposite end of the spectrum: cold blue. For the details I find a reference photograph of an ice cave and use it to help me paint the icicles and



to give the rocks a wet, icy feel. While simply hue-shifting it to blue would have been effective, these additional details all help to sell the snowy environment.

3 Finally, I have fun with a creepy looking, analogous palette. I start by shifting to a blue palette with green mid-tones, then paint the green mist in using a Soft brush on a Soft Light layer. I add



some reflections in the dark water and then adjust the image to give it a darker feel overall, which feels appropriate for the spooky setting.

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THE ART OF

GEORGE HULL

One of Hollywood's premier film conceptual artist discusses his path from daydreamer to achieving his dream job



JUPITER ASCENDING CLIPPER SHIP

"I imagined an elegantly decorated palace as a spaceship."



s a conceptual artist, George Hull's work has helped shape the stunning imagery of films such as Jupiter Ascending, The Matrix Reloaded,

The Cloud Atlas and Elysium. George likes working as a hired gun for different directors. "I help draw and paint ideas for the look of a film's set, architecture, vehicles and environments," the concept artist says. "This is the most exciting part for me – I just love the feeling of discussing an idea at the start of a day and, by the end, having a piece of art in my hand."

Like many, George found art as a boy. "My artistic passion was ignited watching Alien, Blade Runner and Star Wars," he says. "Likewise, my earliest artistic heroes were Ralph McQuarrie, Syd Mead, Joe Johnston and Moebius."

The artist, however, cites US landscape painter Edwin Church as a defining influence. As a child he would spend hours in the Cleveland Museum of Art, gazing at Edwin's Twilight in the Wilderness. "I was amazed by the piece's mood, detail, technique and his ability to capture scale with pigment and brushes." The work, George says, still inspires him today.

"In high school, I researched my heroes of film design and discovered almost all of them had an education in industrial design," he says. With his hope for the film industry parked, George confronted his future, which seemed to be architectural, engineering or commercial illustration. "None of those felt quite right when deciding my college studies," he recalls. And then an epiphany happened. "One day I saw a car magazine with conceptual design for a futuristic super car." George was off and running.



ORNATE SPACESHIP DOCK

"I juxtaposed high-tech and low-tech to create an ornate docking bay with statues and chandeliers."

The young artist knuckled down and won a place studying industrial design at the University of Cincinnati. "I was very aware of the work coming out of the premier schools such as Art Center and California College of the Arts," he recalls. "My ID programme didn't teach car design or the flashy techniques that I saw other students learning."

Indeed, each year, Art Center would put out a calendar filled with futuristic cars ➡

All Jupiter Ascending artwork © Warner Bros.



ARMoured PATROL SUIT

"My idea was for floating cannons and wing segments that could arrange themselves in different configurations."



➔ and high-concept vehicles. "My jaw would hit the floor when I saw it: I would get stomach pains worrying about my competitors. My school assignments were to design a next-generation vacuum cleaner!" He recalls thinking: "I'll never be that good. I felt overwhelmed with the competition and confused. How could I get my skills even close?"

STEEL AND DETERMINATION

George didn't give up, though. Rather, he did something he says every aspiring artist should do. He decided if his assignments were mundane, instead of feeling depressed and giving up, he would challenge himself and push his skills forward himself.

"I would draw complex perspectives instead of simple side-views," he says. "I would create interesting scenarios and work on my technical draftsmanship. I would explore new painting techniques." This way

JUXTAPOSING AESTHETICS

"For this *Jupiter Ascending* concept, I imagined a royal shuttle emerging from an ornate palatial structure."

of approaching work – of pushing his skills – he says, keeps him growing as a creator even today. Not every film, he reminds us, needs high-concept ideas. Some require the basics but, even in those moments, he tries to advance his artistry.

George felt that working in automotive design would enable him to test his skills and use his imagination. Yet to secure an internship and job with a car company, he had to compete with students from all over the world. And some of those students attended colleges with dedicated car design studios and courses. "Getting the Chrysler and Ford apprenticeships was critical in my path, because I got to talk to the staff

designers and see what my life would be like in the future – the reward for what I was striving for," he recalls.

Then George changes tone. "I found out that very few people get to do conceptual work. Most of the jobs involved real-world manufacturing details of the same type of product." There just wasn't much call for high concept imagination. This was a huge let-down. It was made doubly sour as he realised he'd still have to work like a dog to secure a car or product design job, the realities of which now left him feeling cold.

George pressed on though. And then he stopped. "On an internship at Chrysler, I remember sitting in a bathroom stall for an hour, thinking about my path. Where would I be in five years? All roads seemed to lead to disappointment, regardless of how hard I worked."

END OF THE ROAD

Finally the artist admitted to himself that the job he really wanted was in film design. "That felt like saying you wanted to be Han Solo for a living," he says, aware of the remark's significance. He grasped the nettle and committed to the film industry.

George's school wasn't impressed. It branded his decision ridiculous and wasteful. Looking back, George says he was, at that point, a man on a mission. The gloves were off. "I heard that Lucasfilm had an internship programme," he explains, "and I decided that was my goal."

Yet doubt still lingered in his mind. "If car design was competitive, the ILM art department spot was going to be ultra-competitive," he thought at the time. Was

“I got stomach pains from worrying... I felt overwhelmed, confused”



**SPACE BATTLE
STANDOFF**

*"A battle sketch and
forcefield concept from
Jupiter Ascending."*



**MINING SHIP
CONCEPT**

*"This ship from the game
Star Citizen cuts
asteroids and collect
precious ore using
powerful tractor beams."*

his dream realistic? Were there a million other artists better than him? And if it didn't land him a film job, would he be shooting himself in the foot for even a decent ID job? It was all or nothing.

"I tried to be smart. My college thesis was a tele-operated robot, designed for hazardous emergencies or disasters such as Chernobyl. I wanted to define myself as a high concept designer who thinks about function as well as styling," George says. "It won Best in Show and got me into the ILM internship. I still remember listening to the phone message saying I was accepted, and falling to the floor!"

"At ILM I was elated to be working with, and learning from, the artists and model

makers from Star Wars, Indiana Jones and Jurassic Park," George says. "Many of them were my childhood heroes, such as Dennis Muren. He selected me to work on the Special Edition of The Empire Strikes Back, and the Jurassic Park sequel. I was obsessed with learning the craft."

George moved through the ranks at ILM and was quickly promoted to VFX art director. "It was a fantastic job and great for the ego," he says. "But my tasks were mainly leadership, meetings, delegation. There was very little time for creating artwork myself. I knew my skills were not growing to the level of my heroes. People who were involved with creating film from the earliest stages," he says. ➔

GEORGE HULL
VITAL STATISTICS

"I think daydreaming is highly underrated"

Age: 40

Current location:
San Francisco

**Top five
favourite films:**
Blade Runner,
Alien and Aliens,
The Iron Giant,
Double
Indemnity,
Raising Arizona
Website: www.ghull.com



Favourite non-US city: Berlin
Your best career U-turn: Ignoring my professors at industrial design college and creating my own film design curriculum. This decision ended up being crucial to my path.

ARTIST TIP

FOLLOW YOUR PASSION

"Define what it is that you're passionate about, what makes you jaw drop wishing you could create? What would you regret not trying for when you are looking back at your life?"

DESIGNING BALEM'S CLIPPER

George describes the ideas that led to the look of this elegant spaceship from *Jupiter Ascending*

"One of my career goals was to design a high-concept vehicle for a big science fiction film. I worked very hard to draw something unique that hadn't been seen before in the genre, which is the hardest challenge as a designer.

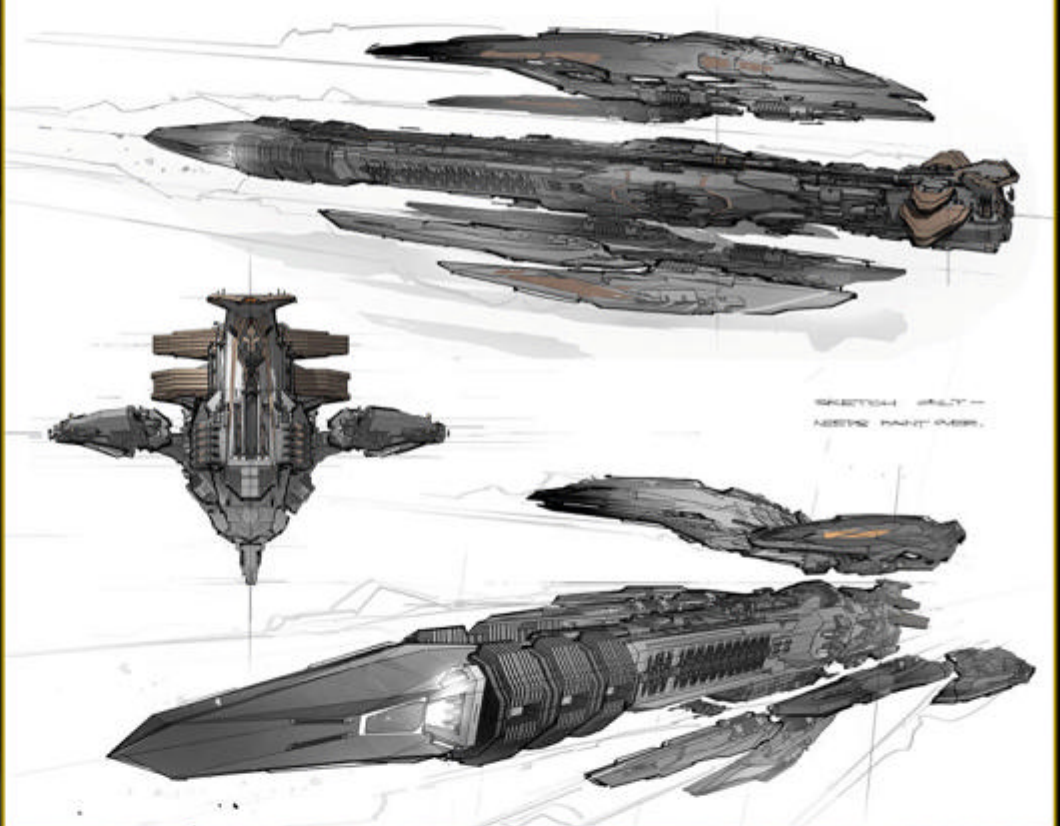
"I love the idea of a floating palace combined with a spaceship, complete with statues and decorative stylings. My starting point was thinking if Napoleon or members of the Third Reich existed in a space opera setting, how would they get around the galaxy? It turned into the lead character and villain Balem's runabout: a giant clipper ship that docks in his factory within the eye of the storms on Jupiter.

"I've always loved to read stories and see movies that in various ways ask, 'Can you imagine if...?' Sure, it's just me tapping into my childhood wonderment of the fantastic. But even though movies are in the business of entertainment, I like to think that creatively inspired minds leaving the cinema is a good thing."



BALEM'S CLIPPER SHIP

"Here's the villain's spaceship from Jupiter Ascending, decorated with statues and ornate decor."



CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT SKETCHES

"I thought about strong silhouettes and a range of wing configurations."

BALEM'S CLIPPER SHIP

"The glowing particles collect within the floating wings and fuel the dark matter engine."



SALVAGE SHIP CONCEPT

"Here's the Aegis Reclaimer and its salvage drones, which I painted for Star Citizen."

© RSI Games



© Sony Pictures

➔ Once more, George reminded himself who he wanted to be as an artist and after six years at ILM, he hung up his hat. Unemployed, he spent the summer working on his portfolio and blindly sent it to the directors of the Matrix movies. "I yelled with excitement," he says, remembering how he felt when the phone rang and he was offered a place among the Wachowskis' design team. "Working so close to the creative process and with the directors was a dream job."

So, what's it like inside the mind of the man who makes such grand and dramatic images? How does he fire the furnaces of his imagination? "Music," George replies.

ROBOT TESTING LAB

"Environment, mood and lighting study for the recent film Chappie."

"When I work I set the mood with soundtrack music and I play it loud."

Despite the often futuristic nature of his art, George's creations are born in a very basic world. "I like to start off in blue pencil, ink and a sketchbook," he explains. "I'll thumbnail ideas for large environments. From there I'll jump into a 3D or 2D workflow and explore the big pictures." Yet part of his process doesn't involve any drawing tools or media at all. "I think daydreaming is highly underrated," he says.

DAYDREAM BELIEVER

George's daydreaming took on a forceful form for the recent film Jupiter Ascending, where he was asked to design a new visual vocabulary for several dynasties, each decorating its spaceships in different ways. The task, he says, always starts by breaking the spell of the blank page.

"I always look to the story first. I discuss everything with a director or production designer. I ask about the feel or theme that should be conveyed." Usually, he reveals, they'll use words like elegant, imperialistic, aggressive or scary. For one of his tasks on Jupiter Ascending, George needed to create a ship design that was strong, elegant and highly decorated: "I used cues from Siamese fighting fish and art deco, as well as a beautiful Rajasthani dagger and pistol."

Summing up his take on the creative process, George says: "I feel good design comes from a combination of thoughtful problem solving and blue sky thinking – and finding the intersection where both can work together."

Just as we go to press, the artist tells us he's got the call to work on a new project. He can't say precisely what it is, apart from it's his "favourite franchise of all time." Clearly, George's dreams have come true. ●

“Drawing a unique spaceship never seen before was my hardest challenge”

ARTIST TIP

WORK YOUR HEART

"To succeed in life you need to follow your heart and work harder than anyone else in your chosen profession. And you must never give up, because your reward will be waking up to your dream job every morning."

CLOUD ATLAS' NEO SEOUL 2044

George was tasked with imagining a future Seoul, after rising seas have semi-submerged the city

"The idea in these images is that massive levees were constructed to hold back rising ocean. The semi-submerged city is now populated by the working class that service New Seoul, which sprawls up the mountainside.

"You can see shack dwellings built up on the levee walls like a coral reef, and shanty town flotillas constructed around half-sunken skyscrapers. I love thinking about how humans would adapt to future scenarios whenever possible in my work. Ideas trump technique every time in this business."

All Cloud Atlas artwork © Anachos

NEO SEOUL CHASE

"Gunship attack along illuminated freeways."

FLOODED SKYSCRAPERS OF OLD SEOUL

"I had a vision of the tops of giant buildings rising up as islands."

SUBMERGED METROPOLIS

"How would society adapt and survive? I love thinking through a design challenge, using my imagination as well as stylisation skills."

Nadia Mogilev

Russian faerie tales and a friend's bad dreams are some of the inspirations behind this concept artist's sketches

Artist PROFILE

Nadia Mogilev

COUNTRY: England



Nadia lived and worked in San Francisco, where she moved to study illustration at Massive Black's Safehouse Atelier. She moved to England in 2011 and established herself as a freelancer for video games, television and advertisements. In 2013 Nadia joined the MPC Film Art Department in London, producing concept art work for feature film projects.
www.nadiamogilev.com



GENSHII

"This is an early concept for a character from Avalon: The World Within, a graphic novel project by Brothers Harrow."

MAKE THE TERRORS GO AWAY

"A good friend of mine was experiencing night terrors. I hoped this drawing of the caring hands of her family and friends would stop them and turn them into beautiful dreams. My friend has this sketch at home and she mentioned that she barely had any terrors after she put it on the wall. Art magic!"

"Sometimes I use a ballpoint pen to sketch, which makes your marking decisions bolder"



CONVERSATION

"I drew this after being inspired by a dark spirit of Russian faerie tales."

SAN FRAN

"Sometimes I use a ballpoint pen to sketch. Every line is a commitment, which makes your marking decisions bolder and boosts your confidence. These are a few sketches from my last trip to San Francisco."



SAVAS

"Portrait of a friend from London."



MOKOSH

"This is a Slavic goddess. I get inspired a lot by myths and fairy tales, where characters are timeless and enchanting. I recently went to Japan and discovered a book of the Japanese ghost stories. What a bizarre and fascinating world of creatures that is!"

PHIL IN AMSTERDAM

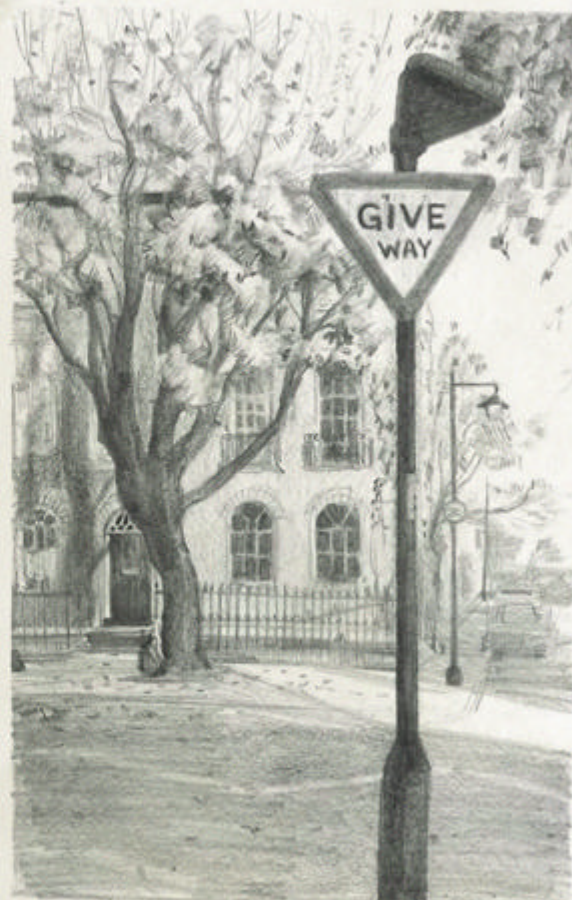
"A sketch of my husband enjoying a cup of hot chocolate at a Dutch Christmas market."



"Drawing with vellum paper and graphite powder feels much more like painting"

TRAVEL SKETCHES

"One of the main reasons to live in Europe is the proximity of various countries and cultures. My husband and I have been travelling quite a lot in Europe, where I often find new inspiration and reference material. So I always keep my sketchbook and a camera handy."



Islington, London

MIKA

"Portrait of Mika having his cigarette break."



DRAGON'S DAUGHTER

"Lately I've been experimenting with drawing tools, and discovered vellum paper and graphite powder. They make you forget that you're drawing - it feels much more like painting."



RAVEN'S SISTER

"I like the theme of dark fairy tales projected on to everyday life. My friend Nina posed for me in this drawing, and I surrounded her with ravens and fading plants. There's a certain beauty in decaying flora."



NEIKA

"A portrait sketch of my friend's daughter. I wanted to capture her astonished look and subtle, beautiful smile."

Want to share your sketches? Email us with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com
NEXT MONTH'S SKETCHBOOK: WALDEMAR KAZAK



WHITE APES

Michael's work was an integral part of visualising John Carter on the big screen.

THE ART OF MICHAEL KUTSCHE

From rapper to illustrator,
Michael explains why he's
chosen to be a one-man boat
floating in an ocean of art



All Alice in Wonderland, John Carter, Oz the Great and Powerful, and Maleficent images © Disney

ARTIST TIP

CHECK YOUR PORTFOLIO

"Be careful when putting together your portfolio. If there's an image on a subject you hate doing, it could be the one that gets all the attention. Draw what you're passionate about – you might have to do it for the rest of your life."



HARE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

In 2008 Michael worked as a concept artist for Tim Burton's take on Alice in Wonderland.



FETCH!

Michael painted extensively for the film John Carter – here's his design for Woola, John's pet calot.



SAY CHEESE!

Working on Alice gave Michael more artistic freedom, not to mention a bigger income.



When Michael Kutsche was 15 he was given a VHS tape by a friend. The video had a defining impact on the concept artist's life, but it wasn't a

documentary on Michael's favourite artists – Lucian Freud, Jenny Saville or Moebius. It was a compilation of hip-hop videos. The youngster, living in the small German town of Marburg, wanted to become a rapper.

By 1993 Michael and his friends were copying the US rap artists of the time. They wore out compilations of the US show Yo! MTV Raps, then moved on to their own material in German. They got signed. "We had a pretty sophisticated beatbox performance," he says, "and even a record deal with a small label from Dortmund. Unfortunately, the local music industry collapsed shortly after and the label went bankrupt, but by then I had already decided to pursue a career in illustration."

Meeting Michael at the digital art festival Trojan Horse was a Unicorn (THU), the 37-year-old concept artist is humble, softly spoken, and generous with his time. Sat in



FINLEY

Here's Michael's take on a flying monkey from Disney's 2013 film Oz the Great and Powerful.

with every other illustrator in the world. You're like a one-man boat out in the ocean, you can't hide behind anything. So you have to get better and better, or at least never get lazy, and I like that challenge."

“With freelance, you're in competition with every other illustrator in the world. So you have to get better and better”

the lobby, as art legend Syd Mead sips a cocktail close by, Michael's star-struck. Yet talking over his career that's seen him move from his hometown to LA, then in 2011 to Berlin, there's the single-mindedness just under the surface that you'll see in most exceptional artists. A dedication to his craft, and a need to always be better.

The freelance life suits him. "I've had offers from Sony Animation, Disney and DreamWorks for full-time work, but I like the variety of freelance. Also, I usually work from home, so after four years of living out in LA I took all the work back with me," he says. "With freelance, you're in competition

Perhaps that's why he turned to 3D last year: to stay fresh. Yet Michael started out as a 3D designer. "3D definitely played a role in the way I draw now. Back then there weren't these amazing renderers, so we had to find ways to use simple lighting techniques to make things look real and less plastic. I was playing around a lot with the physics of light, almost on a scientific basis," he says.

Michael says that working so much in a 3D space meant he now has shortcuts to getting "sparkle" in his 2D paintings. He's got a stash of tricks – and tricks are lazy. "It's a bit of a curse. You can put so much

MICHAEL KUTSCHE VITAL STATISTICS

"Artists sometimes feel like hacks"

Age 37

Place of birth

Berlin, Germany.

Little-known fact

Michael once considered a career as a rapper with his crew Joineez, before turning his hand at drawing and painting.

Top five movies: 2001: A Space Odyssey, Akira, eXistenZ, Brazil, Solaris.



Illustration background

Self-taught.

Do you prefer using a pen or a stylus?

"I always start with a pencil. Powering up your workstation

to get an idea out of your head quickly can be one detour too many."

Website

www.michaelkutsche.com



WALLERBOG

For Disney's film *Maleficent*, Michael mixed things up

"This is the kind of stuff that I really enjoy doing. It's a character for a fantasy movie but the director, Rob Stromberg, was giving me a lot of freedom to play with the design."

"What I liked most about the design is that it's not a distinct creature like a dragon or troll, but rather a weird mix of a lot of animals. And it's evoking all kinds of sensations when you look at it. For one it's repellent, slimy and ugly – but at the same time cheerful and somewhat cute. You might even want to give it a hug if you're not wearing your favourite shirt."

TROJAN HORSE WAS A UNICORN

Michael attended the Portuguese art event last year. Here's his striking poster art for this year's THU.



THE SPIRIT OF THE TROJAN UNICORN

No longer just a guest, Michael has become much more involved with Trojan Horse was a Unicorn art event in Portugal...

"Trojan Horse was a Unicorn is a special thing, more like a family get-together. Just meeting those artists that I've admired from afar is mind-blowing, but when they're talking on stage, they reveal so much personal information. How they got there, their failures, how they burned out and then got back on their feet. You have this emotional relationship with them, making the event much more human than just showing the good parts.

"The hardest part of doing this year's poster art was to come up with a solution that has the unicorn as a main theme and still satisfying my artistic needs. I'm not necessarily a fan of default fantasy, and

unicorns are the epitome of just that. I also tried to break with the historically accurate style of the Trojan horse and incorporated carvings from old Indian temples as an inspiration for the patterns and Chinese horse statues for the head shape of the horse.

"Other than that it was pretty straightforward: pencil sketch, colours in Painter, final touches in Photoshop. I did a couple of rough colour sketches to find the right colour of the sky and lighting mood. I was aiming for something that looks simple and iconic from the distance, but has all the details to communicate scale up close."



RIVER FAIRY

As in many of his pieces of art, there's a mastery of light, or "sparkle", that Michael learnt as a 3D animator.

» sparkle on something when you know how to create volume and add lighting atmosphere, that you almost don't have to be as good with the forms. That's why I mostly start with flat drawings, to check that it works as a silhouette and the proportions are right before I get into the sparkle part."

FEELING LIKE A HACK

There's a fear of churning out imagery, and becoming a creative who leans to the commercial side of commercial art. "It's always an odd feeling to me. Artists sometimes feel like hacks. Like we pretend that we know what we're doing. So when someone admires what I do, when 60 per cent of what I do goes into the trash, it's weird to accept that admiration. I still feel like a beginner in a way." It's really not as simple as 'making it' as an artist, then.

BUTTERFLY CREATURE

Michael's adamant that for all the successful pieces of art, there's a pile of "failures" behind them.



Pattern © iStock.com/AnnaPopulieva

THARK ON A THOAT

Much of Michael's artwork is tied up with big films, such as John Carter, and the unreleased Robopocalypse.



ARTIST TIP

GOOD ARTISTS COPY, GREAT ARTISTS STEAL

"Try to find inspiration in the most unlikely of sources - the ones that everyone else would overlook but contain great beauty when looked at from a different angle."

"Someone may like an image, but there's so much failure behind that image. So at THU it's so nice to hear from people that I admire, like Ben Mauro and Ian McQue, saying just that. That it's a little bit which works, but it's built on a lot of flaws and failures."

Michael was born in Berlin, but hadn't turned one when his parents moved to Marburg, a medieval town close to Frankfurt, where he grew up in a house his father built. It was at this time that the self-taught artist spied magazines and comics that weren't meant for his eyes. Heavy

"A lot of teachers say make your portfolio wide-ranging. Sometimes I'm not too sure that's the right approach. If you really want to do characters, or environments, then you should do that. That's what I did. There are things that I suck at. And I accept the challenge sometimes, and do something just for myself. But most of the time I'm driven into the character area."

That character art led him to work on films. After years of chatting to French artist Loïc Zimmermann on CG Society, they met working on the first Thor film.

“A lot of teachers say make your portfolio wide-ranging. Sometimes I’m not too sure that’s the right approach”

Metal Magazine was where Michael found Moebius, Enki Bilal and Giger.

VHS played a big part in the development in the artist's career, and the next one that struck a chord was Pixar's animated shorts. He applied for jobs as a 3D animator at Silver Haze in Frankfurt, which did animated music videos for electronic music. "But it was the late 90s and 3D was pretty tedious back then, so at some point I got tired of it and switched back to illustration."

The truth is, he was coasting. "There was this moment where I was just doing enough so that they wouldn't notice. The work was solid enough, but I stopped challenging myself. And I hated that." Once he started challenging himself again, Michael naturally gravitated to character work.

Then Michael bagged a concept artist job on Tim Burton's Alice in Wonderland in 2008. "Before it was more like fulfilling tasks to cater to the needs of clients in the advertising industry," he says. "Often they would ask me to mimic a particular style of some well-known artist or company. Since Alice, clients actually expect me to do my own artistic take on the requested designs."

With the success Burton's film brought came artistic freedom and money. "We actually bought a townhouse in Mitte, Berlin a couple years ago, and my studio is on the third floor, which I love, since I can always see my daughter when she's coming home from kindergarten," he says. "Every day starts with getting the little ones ready for kindergarten and then a fast-paced walk to get into the right mood, and sometimes



CATERPILLAR

Although Michael has a wealth of personal art that he aims to exhibit at some point, it's his film art that's brought him international fame.

find inspiration, because working from home means there's always the danger of becoming a hermit and getting all cranky."

From his central Berlin home, Michael ponders the main reasons that have brought him here. "There's a lot of luck, but definitely also a lot of effort involved. Creativity, problem solving and calculation brings you only to a certain point, for the last metres to the finishing line you have to trust your gut." ●

Ka-Pow! Bring your comic art to life with this special issue of ImagineFX!



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Advice from the world's best artists

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Learn how to generate well-thought out concept art, with the help of Ben Mauro.

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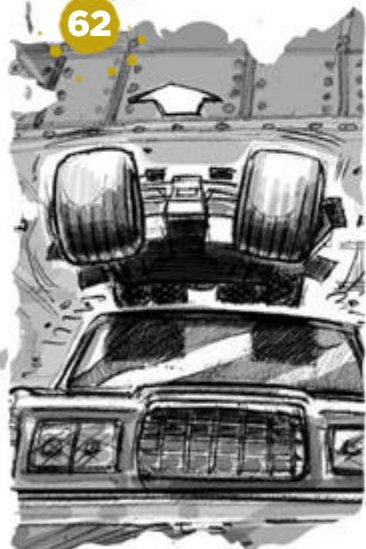
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Make the most of the layer functions in SketchBook Pro, urges Paris Christou.

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Show your character art in a good light, by following Jana Schirmer's advice.

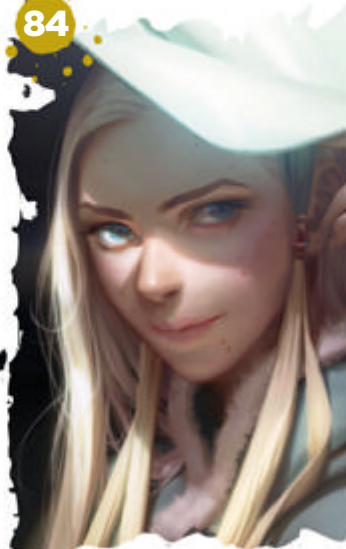
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Photoshop PAINT A REBELLIOUS PRINCESS

Alex Garner shows how careful preparation helps him to create a classic Star Wars illustration

Artist PROFILE

Alex Garner
COUNTRY: US



Alex is a freelance illustrator in the entertainment industry, and a cover artist for Marvel and DC.

www.alexgarner.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
SHIP DETAILER BRUSH

Custom made for this piece to imply complexity on both the Star Destroyer and Blockade Runner.

To many it might seem like the dream commission. But I definitely felt some trepidation when I was asked by ImagineFX to illustrate a Princess Leia magazine cover, based on 1977's Star Wars: A New Hope.

I'm not great at capturing likenesses and I wasn't absolutely sure I could pull it off. But in the end, the lure to work on the famous franchise that had influenced me and so many artists of my generation was just too tempting to turn away. I was determined to make it work. Somehow. Besides, it's always good to challenge yourself as an artist.

I began the task by sifting through online photos of A New Hope, looking for a screenshot that might inspire a strong mental image for a magazine cover. I found myself drawn to the classic opening sequence of the film, particularly the hallway scene in which Leia transfers the secret Death Star plans to R2-D2. I felt the lighting and dark values of the hallway might harmonise well with some similarly lit vignettes of Darth Vader and perhaps two spaceships battling above Tatooine.

Compositionally, I had to be aware of the magazine's title and text placements, a typical consideration when illustrating for comics and magazines. But I enjoy working through these limitations, searching for the ideal layout as if it were a puzzle to be solved. A good composition can make a cover work. But a great one can make it sing. And I started out hoping to achieve just that...

In the crosshairs

I generally like to use compositional rhythms to help establish the main focus of a piece. For this one, it's a simple crosshair rhythm using the hallway and laser bolts combined with the concentric circles of the door frame and the planet. My goal is to lead the viewer's eye toward that particular spot.



Using vector masks

Creating vector masks can be tedious, but they're very useful with their sharp edges and flexibility to change the shape of elements in the painting. For example, I can subtly adjust a leg or jawline with absolute precision, even very late on in the painting process. Once established, these masks can be invaluable time-saving tools.





Detailing ships

For the Star Destroyer and Blockade Runner, adding all that time-consuming little technical detail turns out to have quite an easy solution. I simply create a simple custom brush of scattered tiny squares and just overlap lighter squares on top of darker ones. And voilà - implied intricate ship detailing!

Light it up

For lighting, I use a standard three-point scheme, comprising a key light, a back light and a fill light, along with any indirect lighting created by them. In Photoshop, I do this by applying one Screen layer for each light on top of flat local colour.

How I create...

A STRONG COVER IMAGE



1 Everything in its right place

After submitting a few rough Photoshop sketches, one is chosen. At this stage, a highly polished sketch isn't necessary as very little will end up in the final art. This is primarily about overall compositional placement of cover elements.



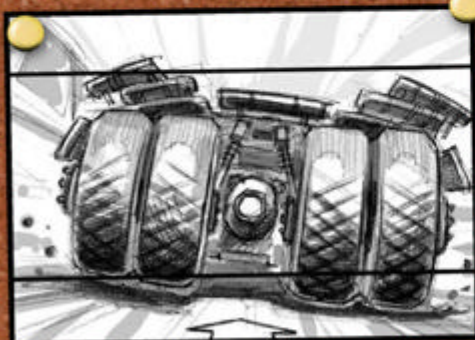
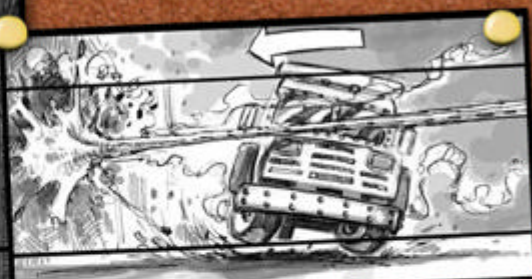
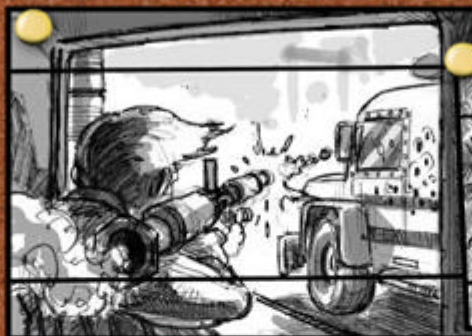
2 Set the stage with colour

Next up is the colour study, to ensure the values and colour scheme work together as a whole. Painting at a small size forces me to look at the big picture and not get caught up in any detail - however tempting that might be.



3 Add those vital finishing touches

This stage is mainly about detail, structure and adjustment. I use vector masks to establish clean shapes to paint within. And within those I apply subtle noise to interest and engage the eye, and to ensure the art doesn't look flat.



Artist insight STORYBOARDS FOR FILM SEQUENCES

Artist PROFILE

Jim Cornish
COUNTRY: UK



Jim has been creating storyboards for the film industry for over 20 years, on such blockbuster titles as Harry Potter, Christopher Nolan's Dark Knight films and Skyfall. He now lives and works in the south-east of England.
www.jimcornish.com

Ever wondered what a storyboard artist thinks when he reads a script? **Jim Cornish** reveals what happens next...

When faced with a stack of script pages and a blank computer screen or sheet of paper, there's always that intimidating moment when you wonder how on earth you're going to get started. It's the beginning of a journey, and each one is different from the last!

Whether it's a Bond movie with multiple locations and stunt-driven action sequences or a musical such as

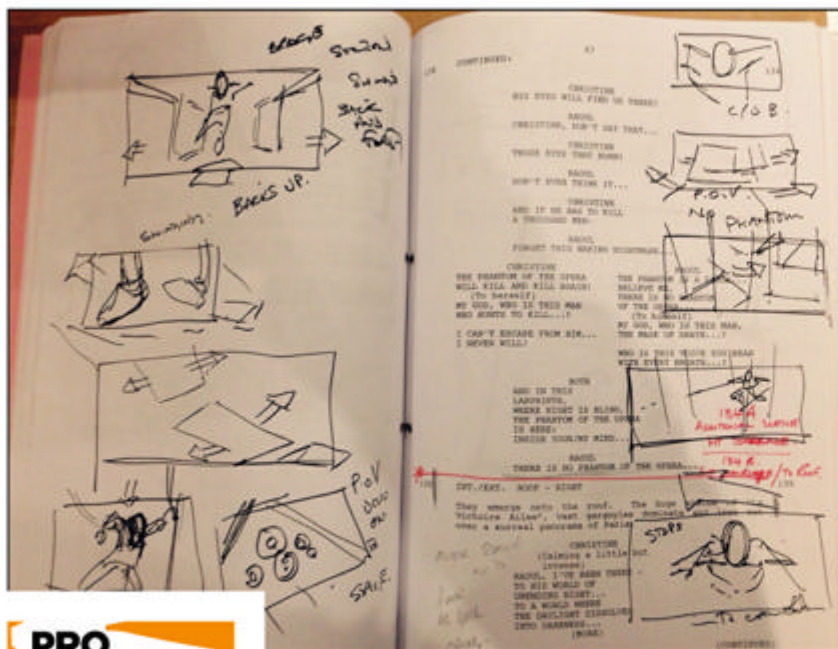
Phantom of the Opera – a studio-based operatic drama where the visual impact is paramount and dialogue is limited – the storyboard artist's talent and skill are put to the test.

In reality, getting started is the easiest part. It's when you have the freedom to put your ideas down, free from the inevitable constraints that influence the sequence as time goes on. A storyboard artist is part director, designer, writer and

cameraman, required to be imaginative and creative and to think outside the box. You're directing on paper, but ultimately you're still just a pencil monkey.

From initial script breakdown to thumbnails, rough drafts through to the finished distributed pages, in this workshop I'll aim to talk you through some of the steps, processes and considerations that present themselves when storyboarding for film.





PRO SECRETS

No time for guesswork

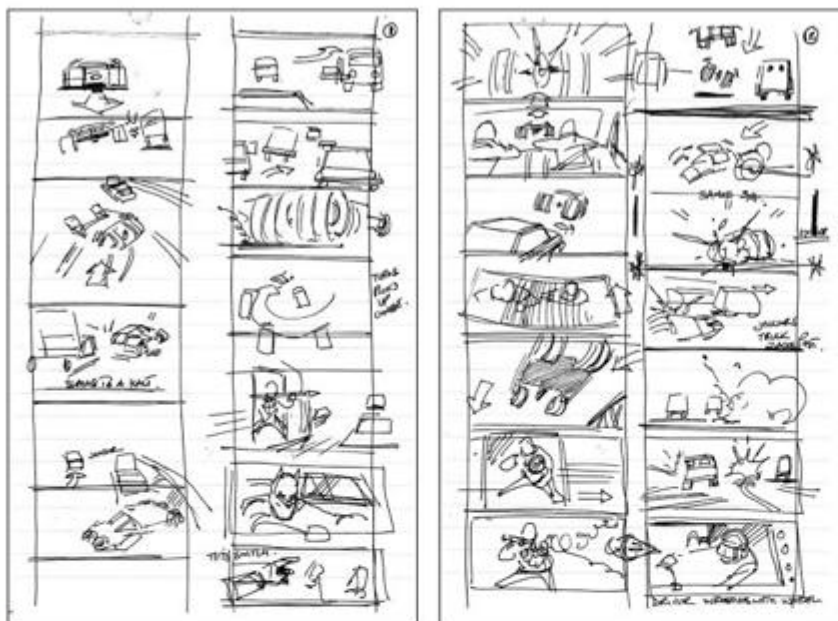
Keep your images clear when storyboarding - they're primarily drawings to impart information. If they don't do that and they leave people guessing, then they're useless.

1 START WITH THE SCRIPT... SOMETIMES

Reading the script might seem like an obvious place to start, but it's not always that simple. Storyboards are part of the pre-production stage, which means they happen relatively early in the development process of a film (ideally). So there might not be a completed script when you start your labours. Sometimes there'll be a synopsis or story outline, or you might be working from a verbal brief after a meeting with the director.

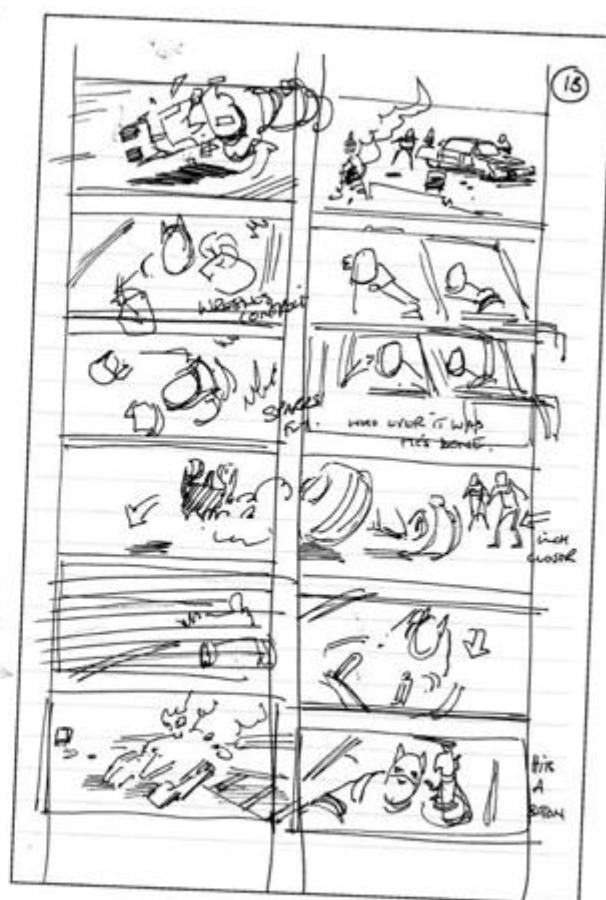
2 IDENTIFY THE BEATS

My favourite part of the process is breaking down the script or brief, picking out the important story points, developing the beats and working them into a coherent visual storyline. Where does our hero need to be, and why? What happens at a particular moment? What motivates certain characters' actions and responses and are there any alternatives? I'll often just write things down first, to get the chain of events straight in my own mind. Then I can start to relate the action to a set or location, and it's at this point that images or angles start to suggest themselves: the dramatic highs and lows start to move to the fore.



3 PRODUCE THUMBNAILS

Next I start thumbnailing, just thinking on paper in a quick shorthand. This stage is all about action and angles: how to compose shots while telling the story in a way the audience can understand. This becomes my blueprint for the sequence, and is when you have the most creative input, trying various permutations to see which angles and setups are the most effective. It's not about the limitations of the script, but more about maximising opportunities and pushing the boundaries.

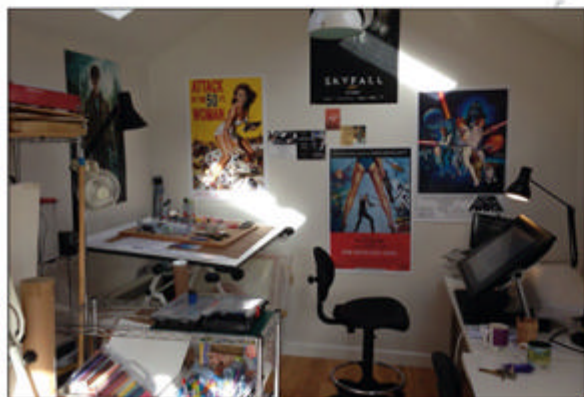
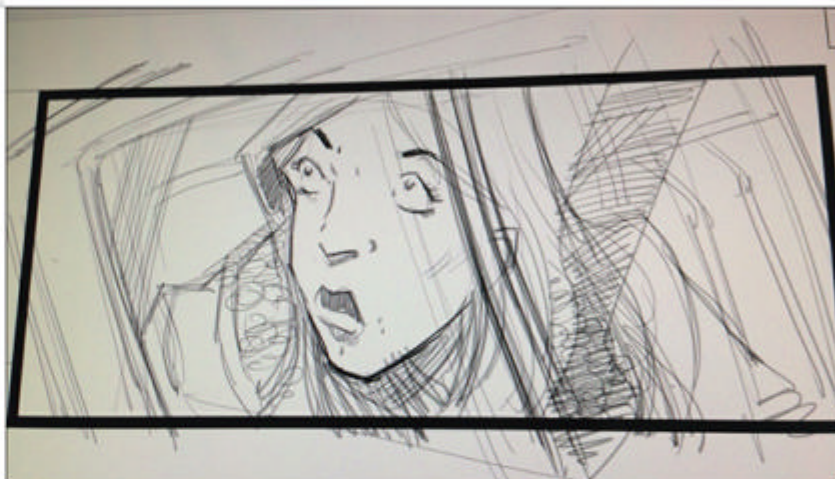


4 DRAWING THE DETAILS

Once you have something you're happy with in terms of structure, you can start to work up more detail. It's important to realise, however, that these early drafts will almost never make it to shooting. Storyboards are merely a visual representation of ideas, so are always subject to change at any stage of production.

5 IDEA OF COSTS

Producers use storyboards to help estimate budgets. It's easy to write "and the ship sank", but until you see how the director visualises that sinking you've little idea of the expense. That's where storyboards come in. It's the same with the art department, stunts, locations, VFX and special FX. It's when the feedback starts coming in that the process of evolution takes over.



6 MY CREATIVE PROCESS

Until recently I used to draw with pencil or pen on plain paper, then scan images in and cut and paste in Photoshop to create page layouts. This meant I always had an original image to work from. Now I work straight into the computer on a Cintiq in Photoshop to create a line drawing, often on a layer over my original thumbnail with simple tone laid on to give form and atmosphere. I use Bridge, which enables me to re-order individual frames quickly before producing a page layout PDF. This is useful when the film edit changes.

PRO SECRETS

Body talk

Practise anatomy and perspective, because without them your boards will be flat and lifeless. If you can draw the human form with a decent degree of realism, then you can draw anything.

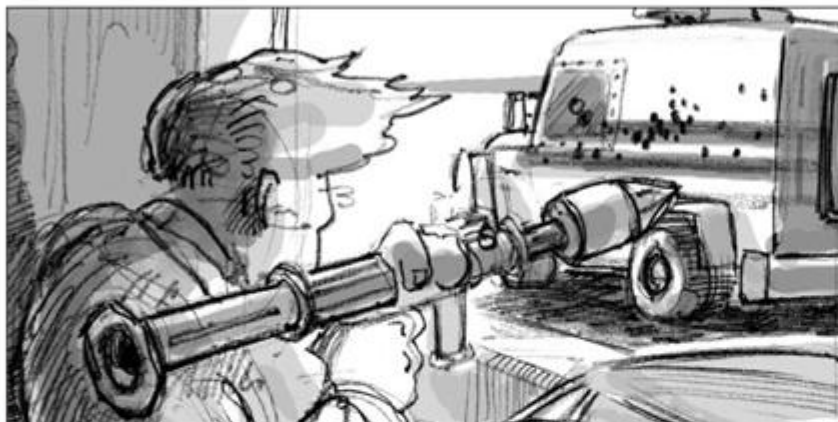


7 A STYLE FOR ALL OCCASIONS

There are many different styles of storyboard art, and none are right or wrong – it's just a case of what suits the occasion. The frustration comes when frames you like or consider the best at telling the story suddenly get cut or have to be redrawn in two days! Often the time at your disposal dictates how basic or refined the panels are: when a 200-frame sequence needs to be drawn in a day or so, the degree of finish must suffer...

8 DO THE BEST YOU CAN

...and as a consequence I often end up hating my work. I see the mistakes and inadequacies, the flaws in the rendering or possible gaps in the storytelling brought about by input from other people and changes owing to last-minute revisions. It's sometimes hard to step back and let them go when they have your name on them and are representative of what you do. There's no disclaimer on the page saying that the sequence was drawn in two days, or that you were working on these panels into the small hours. They are what they are, so try to exercise some quality control over all that you do.



9 DRAWING FOR CAMERA

Composition is a fundamental part of storyboarding, but this isn't as easy as it might first appear: there are several things that have to be considered. What's the information I need to convey? Is it geography, atmosphere, action, movement or emotion? All of these things influence the way the panel is drawn and where the camera is placed to shoot the picture.



10 SET UP THE SEQUENCE

The whole discipline is based on composing shots that are aesthetically interesting and convey information. If shots clash with other shots then a sequence becomes disjointed and the story grows difficult to follow. Shots must work together to guide the audience.



11 THE BIGGER PICTURE

Wide shots help to set the scene. They give the audience a mass of information in a short space of time: the location, where things are in relation to one another, the time of day, and so on. These are the broad strokes, and once they're in place we can work on fleshing the story out in greater detail.



12 WHO'S DOING WHAT?

Establishing direction is vital. If we see our hero moving right to left then we must retain that direction of travel until we can cut out to show a change, by either cutting to a head-on or angle from directly behind or by moving the camera, tracking around the figure.



13 WORK HIGH AND LOW

The height and angle from which we view any action can go a long way to creating atmosphere and building tension. If the camera is low the audience feels vulnerable and everything else in shot looks threatening. Conversely, if it's high we're looking down on everything, which gives strength to a point of view and has the effect of making objects in shot look smaller and therefore weaker.



14 GET IN CLOSE

Close-ups help to show emotion and build tension. Shots of the face, the eyes, the way a hand moves or fingers twitching all give us important information about the characters in the shot. The audience will know how they're feeling and how they may react.



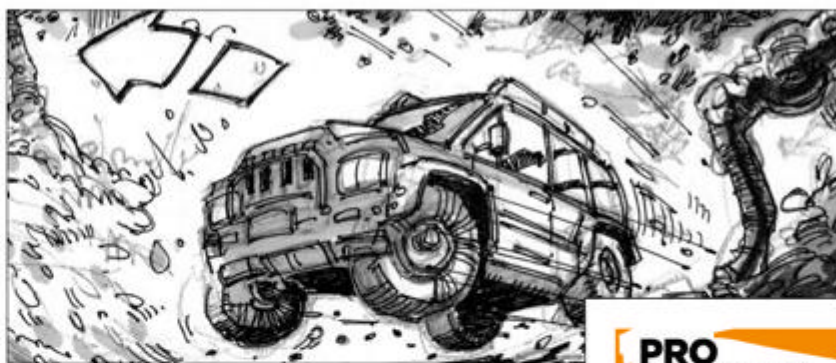
15 LIGHT AND SHADE

Lighting plays a fundamental part in the composition of shots. It helps distinguish depth, and we can play action out in hard shadow or pools of light, in silhouette or broad sunlight. Would the scene benefit from an air of mystery, or are there any theatrical devices or set pieces that give us an excuse for an interesting lighting setup?



16 DANCING WITH THE ACTION

Drawing action is difficult. Knowing where to put the camera to cover the kicks, hits and explosions comes with practice. Think of it in terms of a dance; the camera moving in rhythm to the fight, jumping between punches, cutting from impact to reaction. Use wider shots for coverage, closer shots to show impacts and convey the brutality and pain. The same action will often be covered by several cameras from different positions, which reduces the number of times it might be necessary to repeat the stunt and gives the director multiple views to cut between in the edit. This will need to be reflected in your storyboards.



17 CONVEY MOVEMENT

The different marks you make give a greater sense of movement and texture within the frame. Speed lines make the car appear to be moving. Lift it clear of the road and suddenly it's travelling at speed. Blur the background and now we're rocking!

18 SERVE THE STORY...

All these different elements help with the telling of the story. When combined effectively they guide the viewer through the scene – playing, teasing, informing, sometimes tricking but always helping the director to manipulate the audience and tell the story to maximum effect. Yes, it's fun being a pencil monkey!

PRO SECRETS

A key film element

Storyboards are often overlooked in production art terms because they're relatively simple black-and-white images drawn en masse, but don't underestimate their importance in planning and informing a production. You'll rarely – if ever – get it right first time, so don't beat yourself up. Just look on any changes as the next step. And remember: story, story, story!

Photoshop

CREATE A FANTASY ENVIRONMENT

See how **Tyler Edlin** paints an enigmatic scene that evokes a sense of wonder and adventure

Artist PROFILE

Tyler Edlin
COUNTRY: US



Tyler has been a freelance illustrator and concept artist for six years.

He loves gaming and world building, hopes to continue mentoring, and aims to publish his own book.

www.tyleredlinart.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

This is the type of image that I enjoy painting the most. It was a private commission and I had 99 per cent control over it. The client simply requested a village in a forest.

That left with me with a lot of options, so I wanted to go with something that felt ancient, mysterious and grand. I usually start with this three-word premise. It serves many purposes, including helping

to clarify my vision, providing an objective and boundaries, and simplifying my focus in the early stages.

Trying to come up with environments that feel both otherworldly and yet still comprehensible to the average viewer is definitely a fun challenge. I find that altering the scale, shape and context of normal things (such as trees, waterfalls, even a town perhaps) is an easy and effective way to approach this.

So really all I did for this scene was enlarge a tree to an enormous scale. I changed the shape of it to a mossy dome with branches, and I adjusted the context of the scene by putting in a natural-looking cave with an organic-looking town. If all these make up for 90 per cent of the scene set-up, all that remains is a character for scale and some minor details, such as the fungi that ties together the design language throughout the scene.

Painting the spores

For my spore details I use the Mixer brush with a sphere as my source, to quickly produce lots of them. The results of the Mixer brush vary tremendously, depending on the type of brush used and the source applied from. This is a technique I've experimented with a lot lately.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

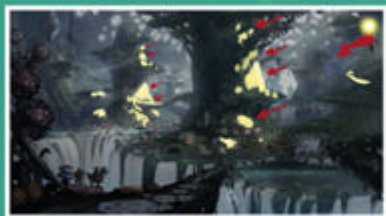
CUSTOM BRUSHES: RANDOMISER BRUSHES



I used a few custom brushes to help randomise my brush strokes and imply detail rather than render out. An establishing shot like this image has greater impact when lighting and atmosphere take precedence over detail and narrative.

Light sources

I imagine the light source out of the frame and off to the upper right. This creates a dappled light effect throughout the scene, similar to those seen on tree trunks on a sunny day. This has two key benefits: highlighting parts of the key forms and adding a sense of depth throughout the scene.

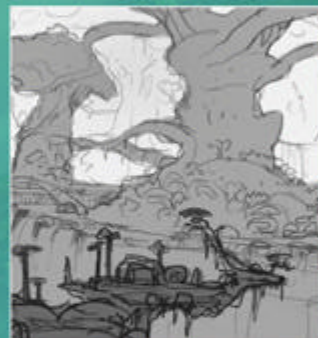


Added depth

To push the depth of the scene, I sometimes want the main area of focus to overlap the deepest area of the scene, to create an immediate push-pull effect. This enhances the overall depth of the image while helping to make the object of focus push forward from the canvas.



How I create a... DREAMY FANTASY VISTA



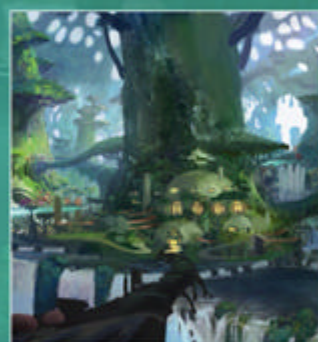
1 Problem solving

The initial sketch and layout is where I solve any problems (with the exception of lighting and texture). At this point, which is fairly quick and noncommittal, I resolve the major shapes, pictorial space and the design language. I also add three values to help gauge the clarity of the shapes.



2 Plotting lighting

Next, I establish the lighting and overall texture. I want to describe all the major forms in value only, and take into account the depth with the atmospheric perspective. Even though I'm exploring a bit of the texture, I'm not detailing. Then I make an Overlay layer and glaze on some of the colours.



3 Add details

This is a battle of what to add and what to leave out. I try not to overcomplicate any areas unnecessarily. If I can hide an area behind a shadow I will, to emphasise the important parts, such as the small travellers or houses.

Real-world inspiration

The works of Hayao Miyazaki and video games initially inspired this image, but after creating some sketches and thumbnails, I spend hours gathering real-world reference. This enables me to develop my core idea without too much influence from established artworks, and helps to make it more believable.

Artist insight

CONCEPT ART MASTERCLASS

Discover how **Ben Mauro's** approach to production art helps him solve common design problems encountered in the film and game industry

Artist PROFILE

Ben Mauro
COUNTRY: US



Ben's a concept designer working in the entertainment industry. He studied industrial design and entertainment design at Art Center College of Design in California, then worked at Weta in New Zealand on projects including Elysium and The Hobbit. He's now a full-time freelancer. www.artofben.com



Over the next few pages I'll be covering the various techniques, approaches and thought processes I use to solve a range of design problems that I've encountered in my career as a concept designer. Many artists tend to specialise in one area or technique, but my mindset and general take on life has meant that I

treat things differently. I try to specialise at everything, and while this involves more time and effort, I know that I'll enjoy the freedom and versatility that it'll offer in the long term.

Each painting technique has its own pros and cons, and being able to utilise the best parts of each will enable you to solve many different design problems that

are sure to come your way. Over time you'll acquire a good set of tools and techniques to help you produce the best possible design for your client.

I'll also be covering a few methods for you to try out when you start running out of ideas on a job, or feel that you're having trouble coming up with fresh takes on a client's brief. Right, let's get going!

1 SILHOUETTE EXTRACTION

This is an old Art Center technique that I use if I start running out of ideas on a job. It's essentially an infinite design generator: you can take any object and create a compelling design out of it, or at least get your creative juices flowing. Start by creating a unique top-down design. Then, using your perspective skills, draw the forms out and render it from imagination to create the design. Once you get a handle on this more traditional approach, you can save time by photobashing into the silhouette and rendering out the design. This method often benefits from happy accidents!

A PICK A GOOD REFERENCE PHOTO

I start the process by finding a base photo with an interesting design, silhouette or shape language such as a fighter jet or insect, and cut out the silhouette and turn it black. Then I start to cut, copy and rearrange it into new designs and ideas. I explore interesting shapes on a purely graphic level.



B CREATE A UNIQUE SHADOW

I take the best silhouette and warp it into perspective as the cast shadow of this new design. I then use the silhouette to start blocking out what I imagine to be the overall silhouette in perspective. This gives a sense of weight to the design.



C APPLY PHOTOS AND DETAILS

Next I take photos and stretch and drag them inside the silhouette, placing them where I think they make the most sense for the design. Then I add details to flesh out the design as far as it needs to go: I'd stay loose for an early exploration sketch, but go in tighter for a finished design.



PRO SECRETS

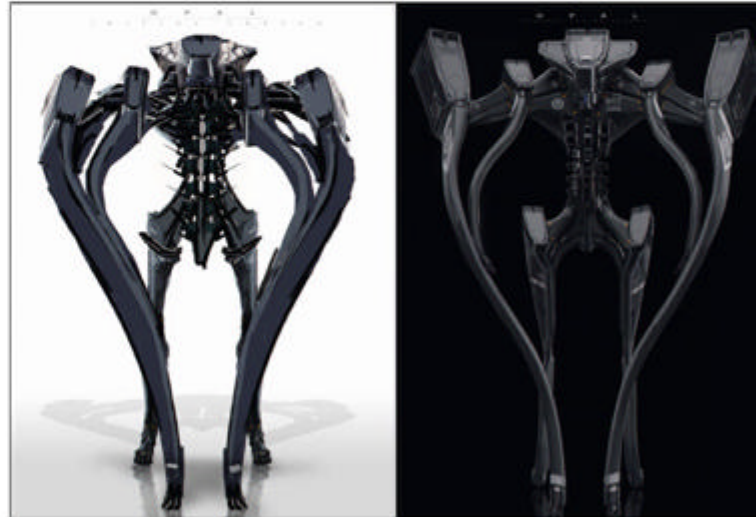
Learn from the best

Scott Robertson's books *How to Draw* and *How to Render* contain information that's essential for budding concept designers, such as perspective, draw-through and surface shading skills. They're a fraction of the course costs I paid to learn the same things at Art Center. Although Scott taught in person, which balanced things out!





“Over time you’ll acquire a good set of tools to help you produce the best-possible design for your client”



2 GO FROM BUST TO FULL-BODY DESIGN

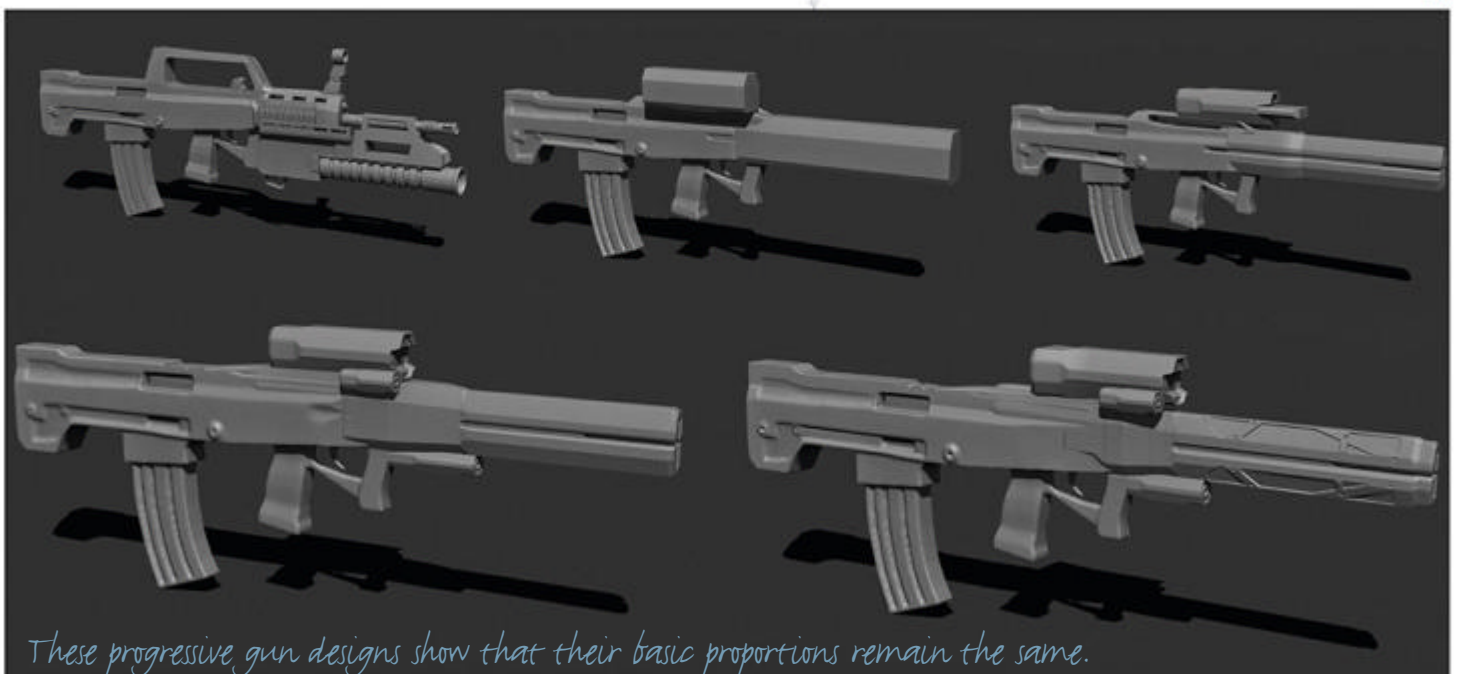
I often take this approach with ZBrush in the early stages of a design job. Focusing on the face helps me to both develop the overall look of a character and explore multiple solutions, before committing too much time to any particular direction. It also means that I’m quickly able to produce a detailed image, and when I paint over this in Photoshop the body design soon follows, as seen in this robot design.

3 3D KITBASHING

This technique helps generate interesting concepts. It supports an idea, rather than dictating its development. For example, I take a photo of a helicopter and use it as my robot’s base, by photobashing various elements and quickly painting the design. I then go into ZBrush and use kitbashed parts with new key elements to create a refined version. Then I take it into Keyshot and render out a more photo-realistic version, before refining the design in Photoshop.

4 A ROUNDED DESIGN PROCESS

I started out as a 2D designer and I take a lot of that thinking into my approach to 3D design. For example, in weapon design there are certain ergonomics that need to be in place to enable the weapon to be able to be fired by a human, namely the distance from the trigger to the shoulder on the gun. The proportions need to remain in a certain range, but everything else is fair game for design exploration. One of the things I often see with purely 3D designers is that they’ll try to do everything from scratch, but a lot of these critical elements are drastically out of scale or place, which makes the design unrealistic.



These progressive gun designs show that their basic proportions remain the same.

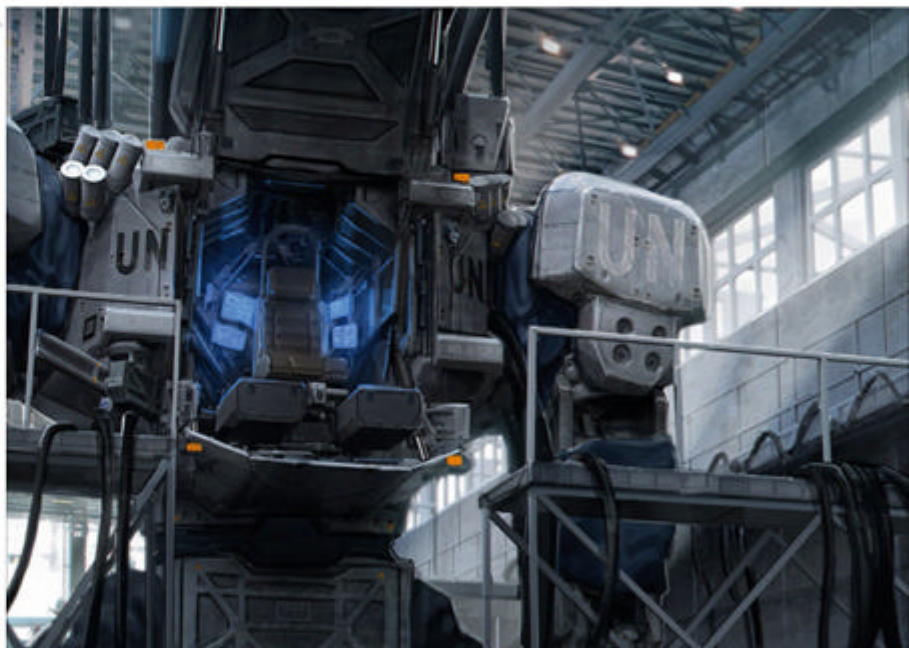
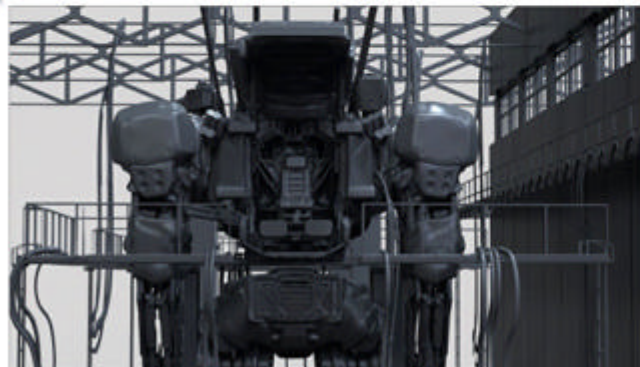
5 GUN ERGONOMICS

One of the many things I learned while working in film over the years was the ergonomics of weapon design, because we had to design and build so many of them practically for the films I worked on. Some of the basic rules for gun design are illustrated on this image and explained below...



6 3D ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

I often use photobashing to create a detailed environment design. This particular design was done for the Massive Black workshop and shows a combination of approaches. I built a lot of custom pieces for the main robot chassis, which I then duplicated around the environment to fill the space and make it more dense, I then used some premade kitbashed parts as supporting details, to help add clutter and density to the scene.



D EJECT, EJECT!

There has to be at least the length of the bullet behind the shell ejection port to allow room for the mechanism to fire the bullet. This applies to all traditional weapon configurations, although newer systems permit this space to be slightly shorter, as seen in the KRISS submachine gun.



“Firing the gun for real would cause it to fly right out of the user’s hands or hit them in the face”

E TAKE ACCOUNT OF DESIGN TWEAKS

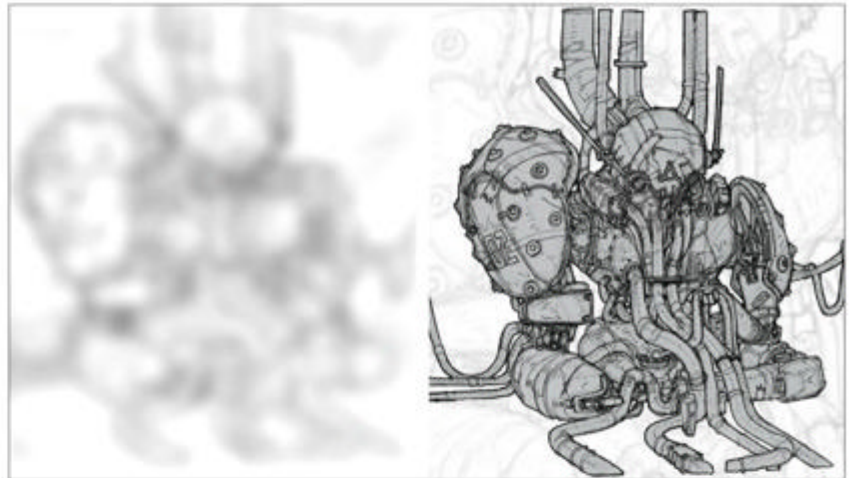
There are some exceptions to this straight line rule. Some variations of the AK-47 have a stock that’s angled down below the line. But this gun also has a special muzzle break up at the front to counteract that aspect of its design. So if you change something in your design, introduce something else to balance it out.

PRO SECRETS

Lock and load
Another way to understand gun ergonomics and their basic functionality is to go to a gun range and see how it feels to hold and fire one. If this isn’t possible where you live then a fantastic alternative is an airsoft gun. While not the same as firing a real one, they’re very authentic and – more importantly – much safer than owning a real gun.

F DON’T BREAK THE LAWS OF PHYSICS

Make sure there’s a clear line from where the shell ejection port is to where the bullet is fired out of. I often see guns in games where a bullet has to break the laws of physics, go outside of the gun, or rotate 90 degrees to travel from the magazine and out of the barrel. Even if the audience knows nothing about guns, they’ll realise something’s off and it’ll take them out of the experience.

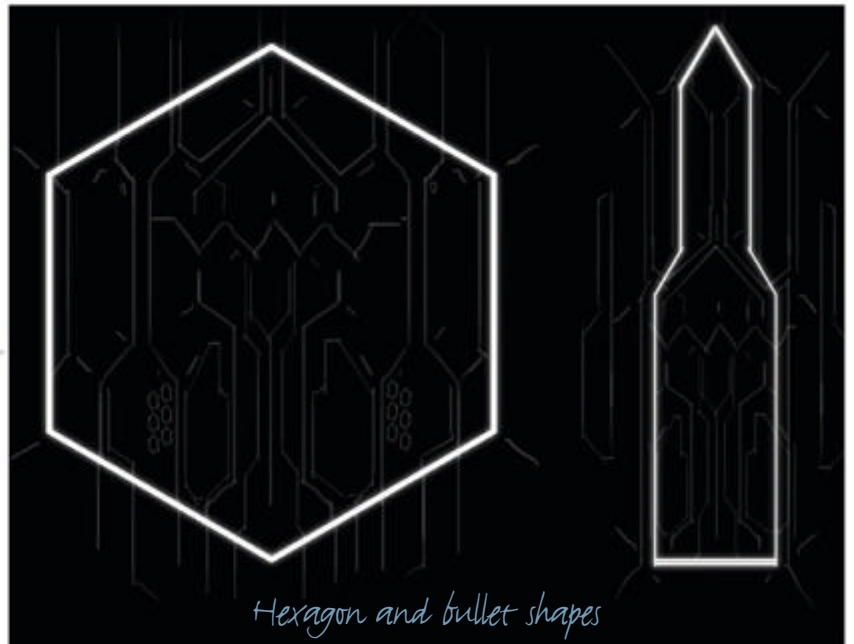


7 INK BLOT CHARACTERS

At the start of a character-led project I’ll get a stack of printer paper and start sketching rough ideas with a Copic marker. I can quickly generate proportions, stance and many other key elements of the design and go through hundreds of ideas. I’ll then have dozens of designs to choose from that are all very different from one another. I’ll then do a detailed pencil drawing over the top to refine the design, which I’ll then paint in Photoshop for presentation purposes.

8 DESIGN THINKING

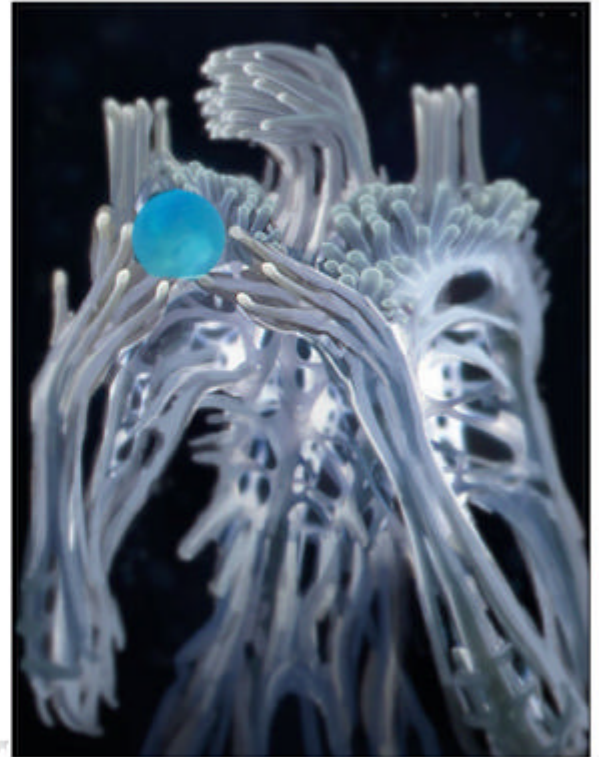
Take any piece of high-tech machinery, such as an F-22 Raptor, and notice how it’s constructed, how the part lines are arranged to create the design as a whole, and the underlying logic that’s applied to the design details. Then try to apply it to your own work when creating designs from imagination. It’s not a technique as such, but rather a way of breaking down all technology and tech design to a fundamental level, enabling you to build designs with a solid understanding of how to arrange and style your forms.



PRO SECRETS

Get real

When I have to find reference for robotics and tech objects, I usually search for things like Ducati motorbikes, NASA, and supercar, bike or plane chassis. Anything to do with the manufacture and construction of real-world machines will lead you down a rabbit hole of interesting reference to source for your design work, which in turn will make it more realistic.



9 KNOW THE LIMITS OF PHOTOBASHING

Photobashing is a powerful tool for design, but I also think it's beginning to dilute originality in film design because of the nature of the technique and its reliance on photos of existing designs. Using this approach saves time and the end result is very photographic (obviously), but if you don't know how to design then you let the photos do all the work and you have little involvement in the process, which can lead to lazy design – or no design at all. Collaging photos taken off the internet should be the start of your image, not 95 per cent of it.

“Collaging photos that have been taken off the internet should be the start of your image, not 95 per cent of it”

10 SOLVING DESIGN PROBLEMS

Design is a life philosophy, of sorts. It's about meeting problems head-on and solving them – and asking lots of questions lies at the heart of the solution. Logic, deduction and reasoning lead you to your conclusion. When I'm given a new assignment, instead of diving in and coming up with something similar to what I've done before, I'll gather reference for the project to use as a guide. Then I ask myself broad, general questions, and once those are answered logically I'll tackle the specifics. The design soon starts to solve itself.



11 WORK FROM THE INSIDE OUT

One of the things I love about working in 3D is the ability to totally understand what you're creating – something that's harder to do if you're only working in 2D. As an example, when creating an alien species, rather than painting its final appearance, try starting

with the skull, add facial muscles, and then skin and hair. This forces you to break down the subject matter and gain a thorough understanding of what makes up a life-form, enabling you to take more informed decisions when creating imaginary organic designs.

12 POST-PROCESSING

Before I send my finished design to the client I usually apply some post-processing effects to my image to make it pop and look more photorealistic. It doesn't take very long using Photoshop, and if you're working in film most directors will respond to something that looks close to its appearance on the big screen. I achieve this by adding some effects, so that it looks as if I had sat in front of my design and taken a photo of it.

A BOOST THE DETAILS IN AN IMAGE

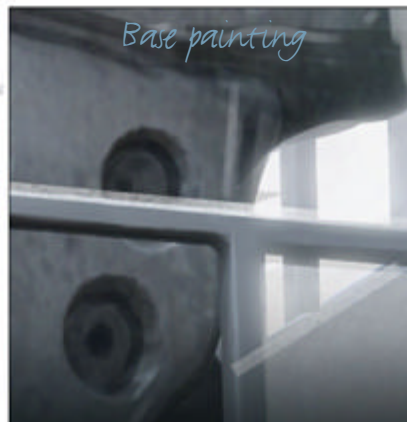
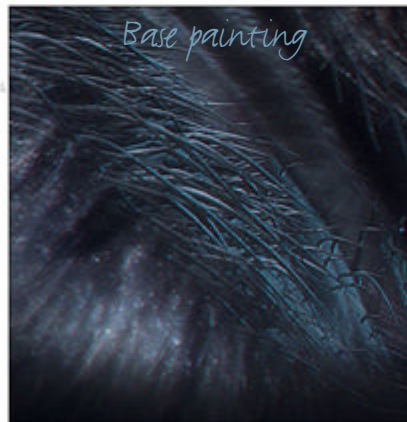
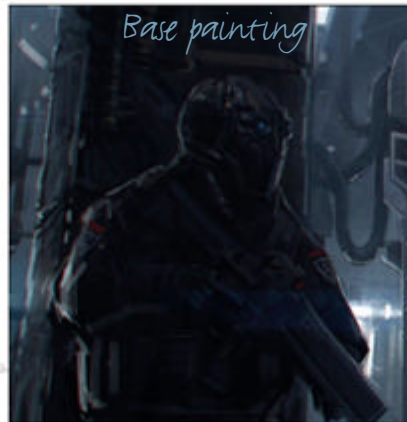
I'll usually apply an Unsharp mask or a Smart Sharpen filter to an image, which bring all my details into focus. Each filter does roughly the same job, but I think the Unsharp mask has the edge.

B DIAL DOWN THE DIGITAL LOOK

The Paint Daubs filter helps to remove a lot of the digital quality of a render. This works well with ZBrush renders of my creature designs. The filter blends ZBrush's crisp, clean layers, especially the light layer, and helps to simplify things.

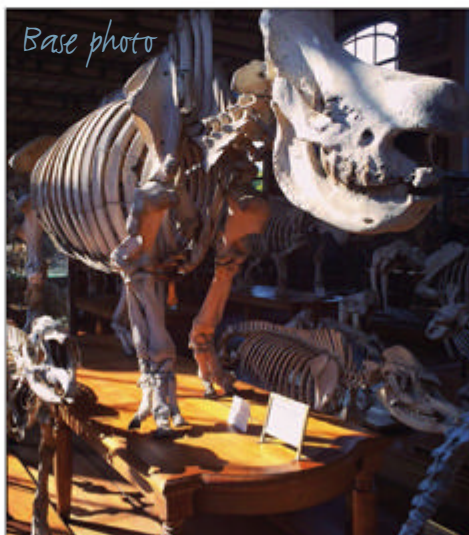
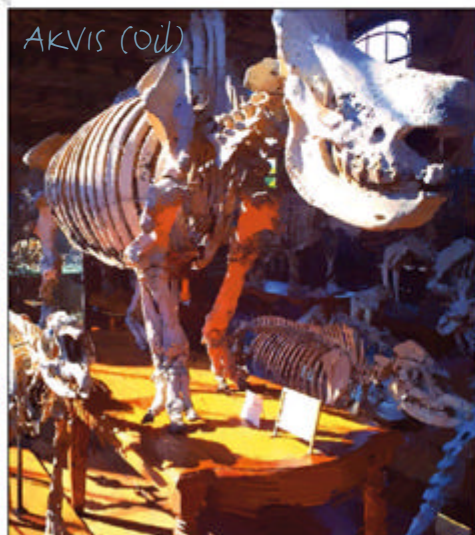
C TARGET THE PAINTING'S FOCAL POINT

Chromatic Aberration helps to enhance the focal point of an image by making it sharper and less distorted than the edges. I achieve this by either adjusting the red channel (be careful not to overdo this), or via the Chromatic Aberration section in the Lens Correction filter. The latter tool is ideal for creature portrait busts.



13 USING ART FILTERS

There are many filters available that suit the production art process, such as those produced by AKVIS, or the Waterlogue app. Making painterly looking pieces of concept art used to take days – now, by clever photobashing and art filters the job can be done in hours. You may not agree with these art shortcuts, but I think production artists should be aware of and utilise all the tools available to us. I don't think any of these filters are perfect, but they do a lot of the heavy lifting, leaving us to finish the image with our illustration skills to give it that vital human touch.



Photoshop

KEY ADVICE FOR PAINTING DIGITALLY

Jason Scheier dives deep into his creative process, from inception to finishing touches, and reveals how he paints a fully realised environment





Artist PROFILE

Jason William Scheier
COUNTRY: US



Jason works as a visual development artist and concept designer in the film, video game, animation and theme park entertainment industries.
www.parallaxinfinite.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

11
CUSTOM BRUSHES!
INCLUDING

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
FOLIAGE 1



Texture brushes are a key part of my workflow. It's important to vary them to create a layering of depth.

For this workshop I'll be walking you step-by-step through my process of creating an environment from scratch. The tools I used for this painting are a Wacom Cintiq 22HD and the latest version of Photoshop Creative Cloud. The Cintiq enables me to both draw and paint in a way similar to the way I work in a traditional setting.

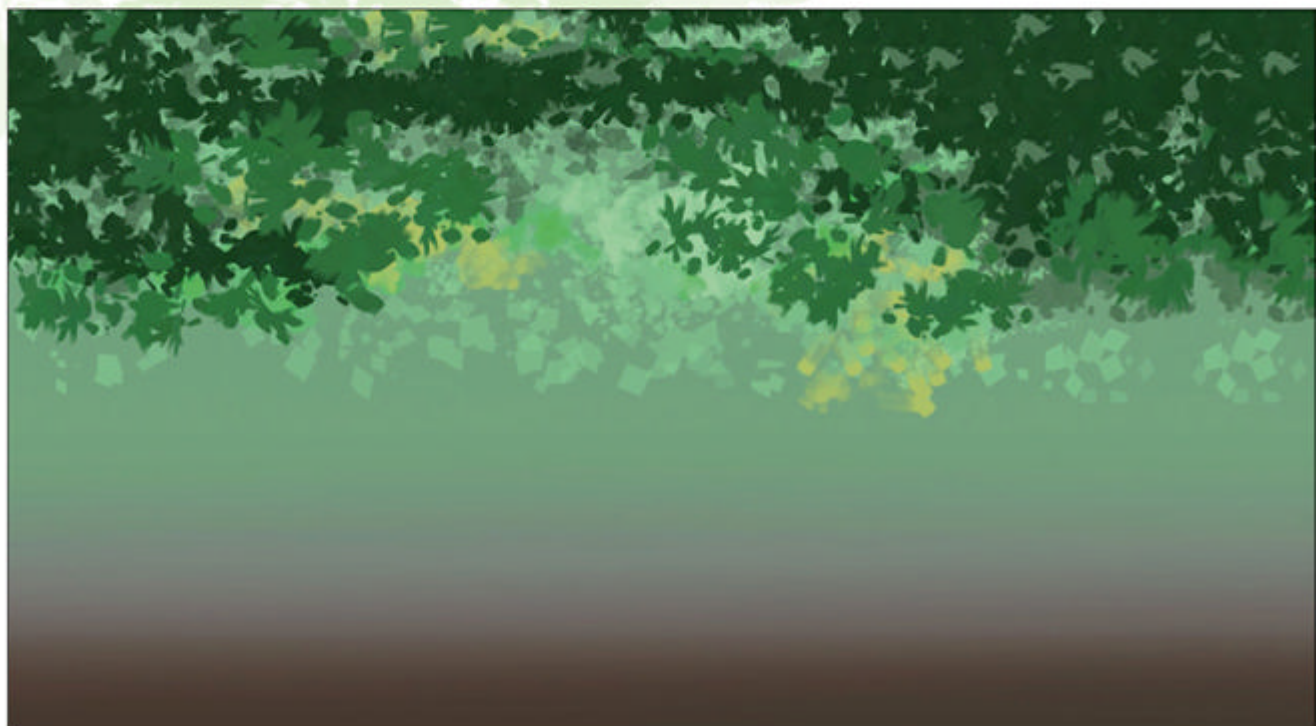
In my creative process, I try to stay loose and spontaneous from the very

beginning. It's important to keep in mind my compositional gut checks, and focus on my staging and 'big reads'. But I'll take you through the entire process from blocking out, through refinement and tightening up the composition into a finish narrative lighting key.

Whether you're a beginner or a more experienced artist, I'll show you how to create evocative compositional choices for your image making. Your designs should grow hierarchically, starting with

blocking in the general elements of the composition, and working gradually into more specific aspects of the painting.

From this workshop you'll learn more about how to use weights, rhythms and visual tests to cross-check your proportions, the relationships between objects, and the placement of elements that I'll be designing. This is also a great workshop for someone beginning with painting in colour. So strap on your seat belt, and let's begin!



1 Keeping it loose

When I begin my painting, I'm immediately thinking in the abstract. Mood and drama are the only important focus for me here. I use my imagination to find specific colours to evoke a feeling. In this case, I want the feeling of humidity, lushness and sub-surface scatter. I enjoy the feeling of dappled light creating patterns on the ground from a tree canopy overhead. At this point I'm not concerned about specific details, only an emotional response.



2 Patterns, light and textures

In this step, I'm still keeping things loose and thinking primarily of the mood, feelings and drama. However, now I want to introduce the sense of staging – a place for the eye to travel within the painting. I find that a good stage, even early on, can make for a more evocative image. Getting information such as rocks, leaves, patterns, shapes and the sense of a ground plane is the foundation on which I build my painting.



3 Building in your background

Now to start layering in trees for the background. It's important to create a sense of believable depth. Like any structure, your scene needs a solid foundation. Here, I'm thinking of big, medium and small shapes, the textures of the trees, and the relationship of lights, mediums and darks. Create visual rhythms that lead to an exit for the viewer to find.



Shortcuts
Eyedropper selection
Alt+click (PC)
Cmd+click (Mac)
Pick up colours on your canvas, to speed up your workflow.



4 Overlap and reveal

I can't overstate how important it is to create a sense of overlap. It's a way to establish fore-, middle- and background. Adding in these overlapping rocks on varying levels of value will introduce depth. It also builds a pathway for the viewer through the piece. Bring in big, easy-to-read shapes at this point. Think boldly and the painting will become bold!

5 Keep it dynamic

After blocking in my overlapping rocks, I immediately start imagining ways to generate an even more compelling feeling of space. For this particular image, I want to create a rock that overhangs the viewer. This composition approach whisks the viewer right into the painting, by placing them underneath an object. I'm not considering any details here, just thinking about confident mark-marking. I use the Lasso tool to create sharp edges on my rocks. Think dark to light, and light to dark.



6 Focus on lighting

Up until now, I've focused on big graphic reads. Now, with the foundation laid down, it's time to add some dappled lighting with varied saturation, intensity and brightness. It helps the viewer navigate through the painting and find their way into the background. Create opportunities to keep the viewer engaged. In this case, I think of an S-curve ground-plane composition.



7 Pushing and pulling

I push and pull the image by creating more areas of focus. These my secondary reads are my little pockets of goodness. The viewer won't want to just look at the primary focal point. They'll want to move around; their eyes should constantly travel. I add a bokeh light pattern in the background with some colour modulation to help the eye to stake its claim.

PRO SECRETS

There are no secrets

Everything is there right in front of you. Take a moment, do your research. Find out how it's made, study and practise it. Working, investigating and finding your way is the best way. I found each teacher has something new to add to my repertoire. Consider techniques like a tool on your tool belt. Each is a critical piece for creative problem solving. This is my best advice.



8 Opening up the scene

I'm feeling a little trapped inside my composition. The best way to create more real estate is to recrop, so I open my canvas up at the bottom and create a reflection of the area I've already painted. I select all the upper portion of the painting, then paste it and flip it upside-down. Next, I add a ripple effect by going to Filter>Distort>Ripple, and adjust the ripple's size.





9 Creating atmospheric perspective

The background is feeling slightly flat, and the colours of more distant areas should become cooler and less saturated. I consider this to be my most important step because I want to make my space feel believable. There are no such things as muddy colours, only muddy relationships. Group some colours together into a cooler zone and they'll feel secondary and be considered background. Instantly, the middle area becomes a colour space.



10 Introducing a narrative

Storytelling is king in image making. Even if there are no characters present, the environment itself should become a character. Find ways to add anthropomorphic elements, such as the shape of a subliminal face. People won't notice them right off the bat. It should happen deep in their subconscious. I decide to add a more literal version: two forest protectors standing guard.

Shortcuts

Flip Canvas

Image > Image Rotation >
Flip Horizontal (PC and Mac)
Enables you to look at your
image with a fresh eye
and stop it becoming
lopsided.



11 Apparitions abound

Running with the thematic idea of having creatures inhabiting the forest, I decide at this point to add more. The richer and deeper you can make the scene feel, the better. I want this place to feel alive: the mood should be deep, dark and mysterious. The saturated light, spotting of atmospherics and layering of texture bring the environment to life. It's not just a static image anymore; there should be a sense of kinetic energy in the painting.



12 Directing the lighting

I add a warm, direct light source on the left side of the picture plane. Light direction is one of the most important aspects of any painting. Light doesn't just appear out of thin air – it travels from a point of origin. The warm glow filling the left side now creates a beautiful blending of warm and cool. Adding complementary colours is crucial for harmony.

PRO SECRETS

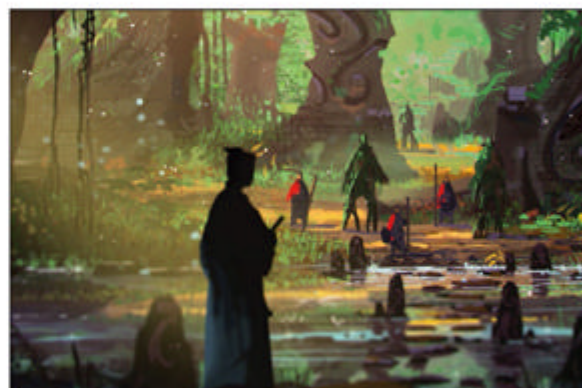
Study from life

Nature, architecture, culture and the world around us is our greatest source of inspiration. If you want to be truly original, don't look at other artists. Instead, look at how a bird flies, observe the light as it dawns from the horizon. Real-world experiences are our best teacher. You need to touch it, taste it, and hear things to understand them. Take your sketchbook with you, leave the house and record the world around you. Get out there and experience it!



13 Colour grading and correction

It's also key to unify your colours. Think about pushing the eye around in the image with how your colours communicate with each other. Pops of light create apparent colour. See how the light dances through the scene. Watch as it reflects, bounces, glows, blooms and draws you into this world. I treat the scene as if it's being photographed by a lens, by adding in iris blur.



14 Crossing the finish line

I add a samurai character in the foreground to push culture into the painting. Samurai are symbols of life and death. This showcases the magic of the background world and the tangibility of the foreground world. Two thresholds being crossed in the same image. By adding in a spotlighting effect on the left, I create a consistency to the middle ground layer.



SketchBook Pro USING LOCK TRANSPARENCY

Paris Christou shows you an effective way to take advantage of the power of SketchBook Pro's Lock Transparency function

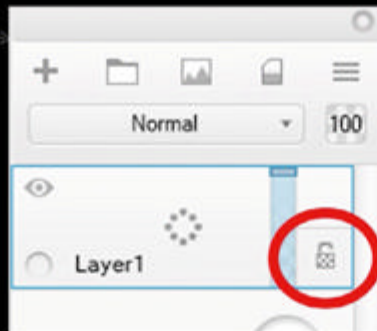
SketchnBook Pro 7 for Windows and Mac offers a variety of tools and options designed specifically to help improve our workflow. Along with all the amazing user-friendly tools the software offers, the Lock Transparency function can make your life much easier.

You'll learn where to find this function, how to colour your line-art and

even render any element you either draw or paint on the canvas using Lock Transparency. The name isn't very helpful: it doesn't so much lock anything as mask transparent areas of a layer. All you really need to remember is that when it's active, you can only affect content that already exists on the layer, not draw or paint in new areas. This is a basic formula to help you better understand this function.

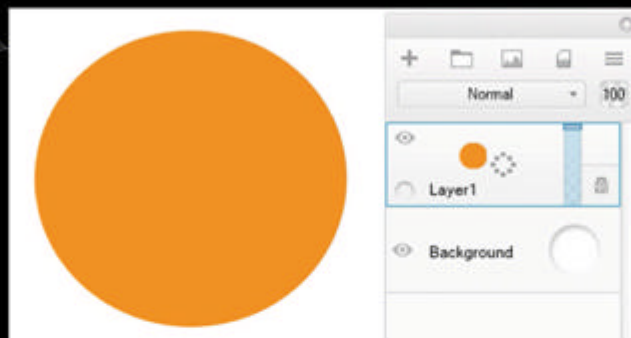
1 Locate the Lock Transparency function

The Lock Transparency function is located at the bottom right of each layer (the padlock icon). This function enables you to edit anything you draw or paint on a layer, which can speed up your workflow significantly. Bear in mind that when you draw or paint, it's always best to separate your primary elements on to different layers before applying the Lock Transparency function.



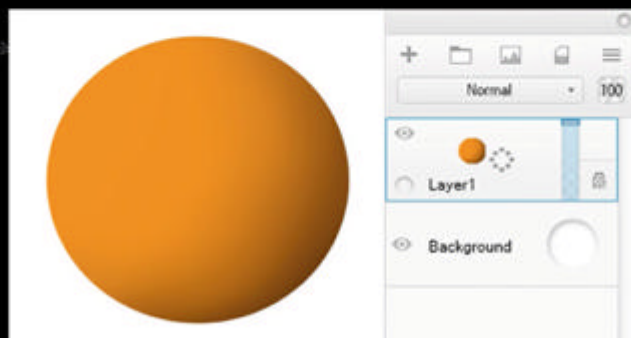
2 Paint an element and lock its transparency

Select a paint brush and paint an orange circle on a layer. If you then enable Lock Transparency on this layer, you can paint only inside the orange circle. This means you'll keep your edges nice and sharp. However, you won't be able to erase the orange circle as long as Lock Transparency is enabled, because this function enables you only to add to the layer and not subtract from it.



3 Render the painted element

Switch to the Airbrush tool or a soft Round brush and choose a dark brown colour. Begin painting around the side of the orange circle and you'll soon see the effect of Lock Transparency. Notice how accurate the edges are: your paint stays within the painted circle. This technique keeps your painting clean, enabling you to focus on blending and colouring your artwork.



Artist PROFILE

Paris Christou
COUNTRY: Cyprus

Paris is a 2D animator, illustrator and teacher at ToonBox Studio. He's also a prolific YouTuber, best known for his cartoon pin-up character Cherry. www.toonboxstudio.com

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR COLOURING



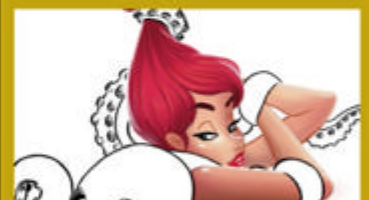
A. Get your layers organised first!

My layers are always organised by having a layer for each major element in my artwork. In this example I have a layer for my line-art at the top and a layer for the subsequent base colours of my character's skin and hair. This means I have full control over editing each element separately.



B. Colouring the line-art

The next step is to enable the Lock Transparency function for my line-art layer, which gives me the option to colour just the outline of my character. Select the base colour of the skin and go slightly darker. Notice now as I paint the skin outlines, it gets the lines with the skin colour. I then repeat the process for the line-art of the eyes, lips and hair.



C. Add light and shadows to the base colours

For the final stage, I Lock Transparency for the base colour layers, take an airbrush and start rendering by shading in the tones. My main focus is to play with the edges of the base colours to reflect light and shadow. You can always go back into the line-art layer and adjust the colours to fit the tones.



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Oh... boy!

Loopydave (or Dave Dunstan to his mother) paints a classic beefcake male with a twist.

Character doodles

Russian caricature and pin-up artist Waldemar Kazak open up his eclectic sketchbook.



How to paint retro art

Fiona Stephenson looks back to the master artists of pin-up to recreate her own centrefold in oils.

ISSUE 123 ON SALE *Friday 22 May 2015*

Photoshop

RENDER LIGHT AND SHADE ON THE FACE

Jana Schirmer explains how she decides the best lighting for a portrait and renders the illustration

Artist PROFILE
Jana Schirmer
 COUNTRY: Germany

Jana is a self-taught freelance illustrator and concept artist for video games, currently based in Berlin but moving to California later this year.
<http://ifxm.ag/JanaSch>

GET YOUR RESOURCES
 See page 6 now!

Whether I'm painting a portrait from life or creating a piece from my imagination, I use pretty much the same basic workflow for all of my digital illustration. I almost always start with a sketch, in which I try to nail the composition and think through what I'm aiming to do. If you don't have too much problem-solving to do when you've started painting, the process seems much faster – and it feels better if you don't experience random problems all the time during painting!

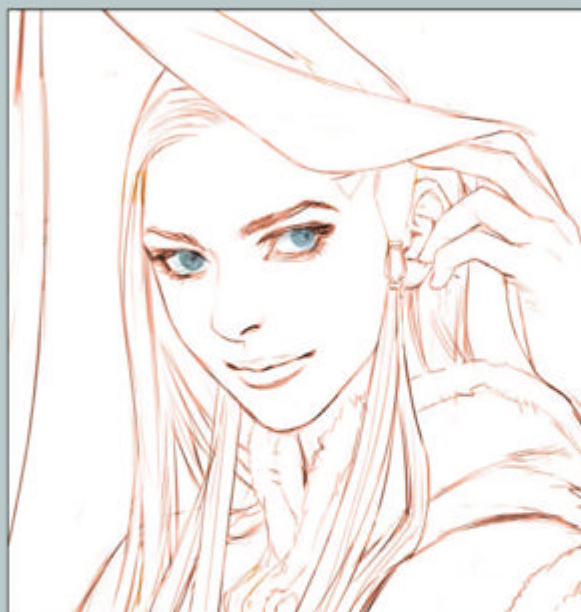
I find that painting is easier if you put down local colours first and then work on the lighting. The key to this approach is

using Photoshop's layer blending modes, especially Multiply. As well as giving you control over the lighting and shading throughout your image, this makes it very easy to adjust the colours in it and try out different variations, without having to do any tedious repainting.

In this workshop I'll reveal how I set up my layer order so that everything is 'just so'. I'll mostly focus on how to light the face, but I'll also talk a little bit about the final steps I use to make the finished image look more organic and less sharp and digital. I hope this will give you some idea of the many possibilities you have with this technique.

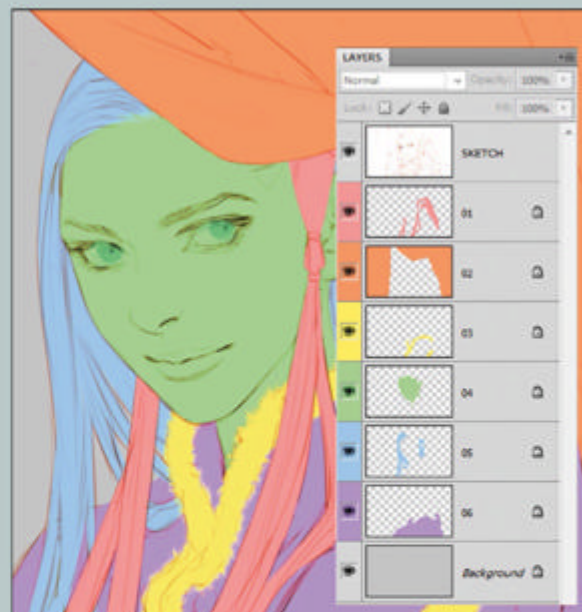
PRO SECRETS

Think through the lighting
 Lighting can be hugely complicated, but there are four key elements: the main light source; "bounce" light reflected off coloured objects nearby; colour casts caused by light shining through something; and the shadows created by nearby objects. This last factor (called "ambient occlusion") is a great tip to help anchor a subject in its environment.



1 The sketch

Whatever I'm painting, I usually start with a sketch. Then I add a new layer in Overlay mode and fill it with orange, so my outlines are tinted orange. Different colours create a different feel, but usually an orange/sepia works well, like an Old Master underpainting. Here I want to give my subject bright blue eyes, so I use a blue colour on the Overlay layer to make her iris blue.



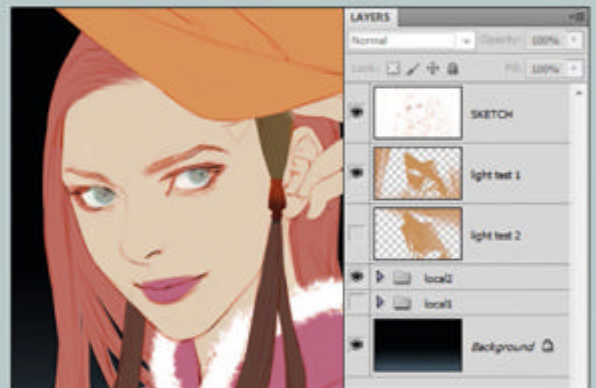
2 Layer masks

Next I block in the masks for later rendering. I use a Hard brush to clearly separate the flats on to different layers, especially objects that touch each other. That's why the hand isn't on the same layer as the face, even if both are "skin". Otherwise, I like to keep different materials on their own layers, for example the curtain, her hair, her face and the fake fur.



3 Picking local colours

Once the flats are done, I can easily try all kinds of local colour variations. I simply lock the Transparency on a flats layer and fill it in with a colour. I wanted to try a version with warm local colours and one with cooler colours. Even if you start with a clear vision of the colours, it's still fun to try out slightly different variations. This approach is particularly useful because the outcomes can be so unique – ones that you might never have thought of!



4 Layer order

Keeping my layers organised helps my workflow. I keep the two local colour variations in two different groups so I can switch them on and off when I want to. At this stage I also start to plan the light setup. I add a new layer in Multiply mode and sketch in my idea for the light direction. I try two slightly different light setups for this image – see the next step... ➡



5 Setting up light and colour

I try both light layers on both colour versions to see which one I prefer. I think the version with her face completely in the shade would have made a more interesting image with some bounce light, but I decide to go for the version with the more direct light on her face. This means that there will be some light variation in the image.



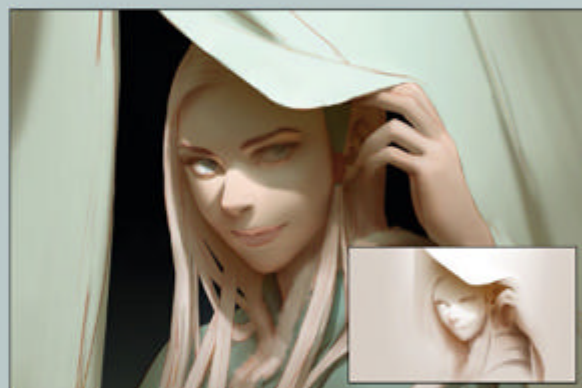
6 Playing around with possibilities!

It's fun for me to imagine the many different ways you can set up the light and colours in any picture. Here I change the colour of the Multiply layer with my shadows using Ctrl+B. I think doing this alters the mood a lot! So I go with the version I like the most, which is a mix between the first and the last one.



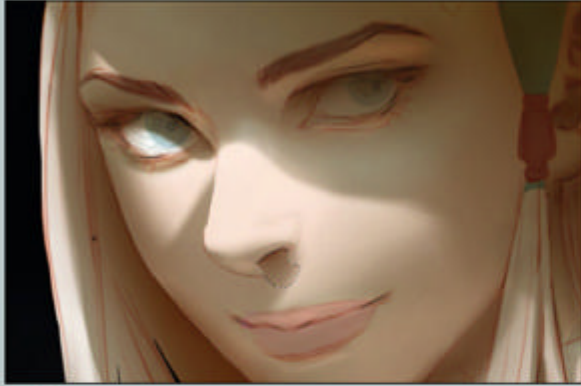
7 Adding bounce light

With my light direction set, I add bounce light. I make the fabric she's holding look a bit translucent so it casts some colour on her face. I also add a warm tone to surfaces facing downwards to suggest bounce light from below. For this I create a new layer and set it to Add. I love this layer mode, but you must use a pretty dark colour – if you use a bright one, it just turns out white-ish.



8 Adding ambient occlusion

I feel the picture needs a bit more depth. So I create one more Multiply layer to add more shadows. (The inset shows the shadow layer without the image.) This is rather sloppy compared to how other artists set up their ambient occlusion layer. The more you think this through, the more realistic it will look. My favourite tool for this is a Soft brush and the Lasso tool...



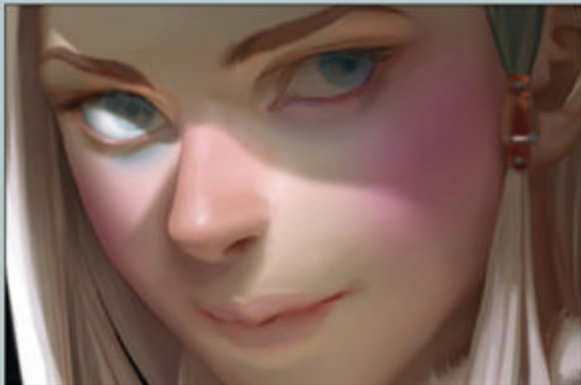
9 Refining the edges

I love using the Lasso tool to keep my edges clean. Here for example, I use it for the nostrils to create a deep shadow inside them. I also use it for the eyes to make them appear deeper. If the “marching ants” bother you, press Ctrl+H to hide them. Press the same shortcut and they reappear. I find this especially useful when working with very small selections.



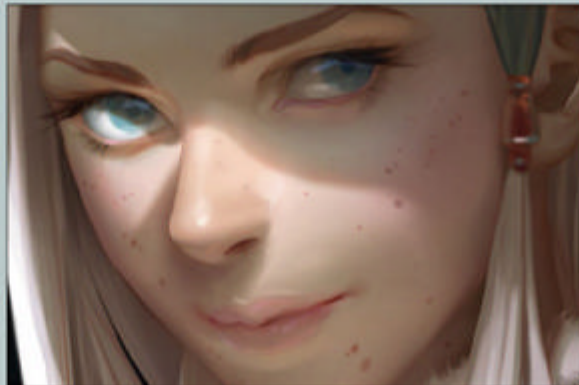
10 Creating new layers

I merge all my layers into a new layer (Ctrl+Shift+Alt+E), then use my masks from step 2 to apply the image on them. I Ctrl-click the mask layer thumbnail to produce a selection of them, then press Ctrl+J on the image layer to create a new mask from the selection. I keep Preserve Transparency on the layers because I don't want to draw over my masks yet. Now I start rendering and paint over the outlines. I also add some highlights on her face in the areas that aren't covered by the shadow.



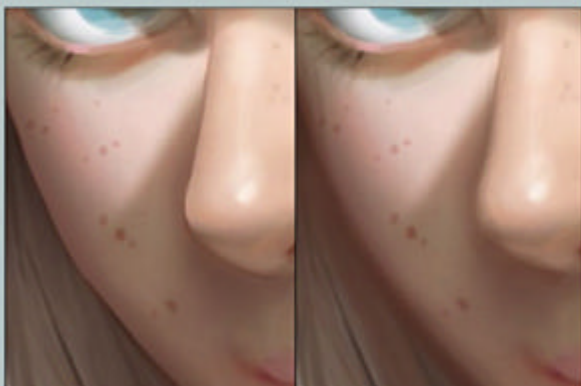
11 Varying local colour of the face

At this stage, I felt the skin could use a bit more colour – like some red to the cheeks and nose and a tiny bit of blue or purple under the eye. When painting men it helps to add more blue tones to the beard area. This is also a great way to include makeup, like eye liner or eyeshadow, or tattoos. It's painted on a Multiply layer, so you can just reduce the opacity if it's too heavy.



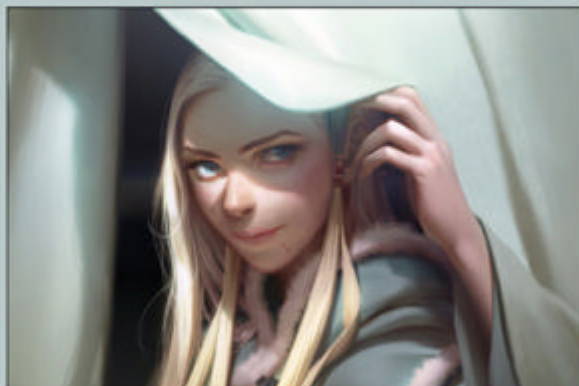
12 More details!

I add some details like eyelashes. (I leave these till near the end since they can be a bit distracting when you're figuring out the form of the eyes.) I also add some skin spots on a Multiply layer with a brownish colour. Adding highlights to the eyes and lips is a great way to separate the different materials in the face. I make sure I include bounce light in the eyes as well as the skin.



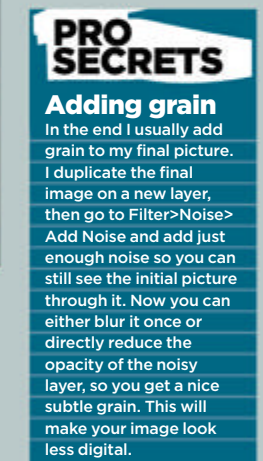
13 Rough up the edges

Some artists can paint with awesome brushstrokes right away, but unfortunately I'm not one of them. I usually go over a picture with bigger brushes in the end because the edges do look a bit too clean with everything separated by masks! Now is a good time to drop everything on to one layer and get rid of the hard, digital-looking edges and include some nice brushstrokes.



14 Finalising the picture

I also added some strands of hair, further softening that excessively hard-edged digital look, and I create a new Add layer to emphasise the bright light coming from above by introducing a bloom with a big Round Soft brush. I also brighten all the light areas in the image on the same layer to make them a bit more contrasty to the shadows. That's it! It's done!





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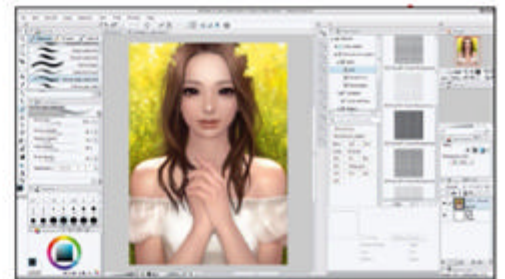


Artist's Choice Award
Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...



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ON TEST



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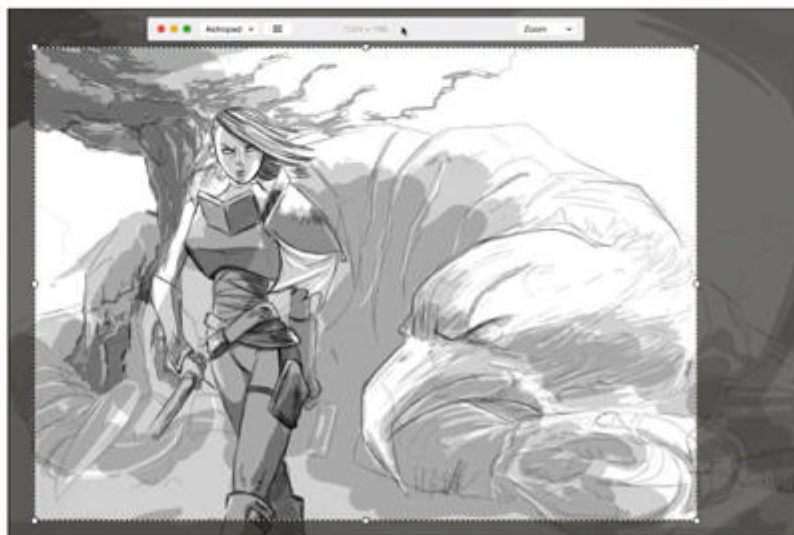
RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Ordinary ★★★★★ Poor ★★★★★ Atrocious



Bring up a heads-up display with shortcuts such as Shift and Alt, to work without a keyboard.



The white circle on the left brings up a menu filled with commonly used options that can be customised to your own preferences.



There are some improvements needed, but the art app shows great promise for now.

Astropad ios

BUDGET BREAKTHROUGH Discover if this app can really turn your iPad into a graphics tablet for a bargain price

Price £21 **Company** Astropad **Web** www.astropad.com

Digital artists would love to work on a Wacom Cintiq. But at £1,000 for the entry-level model, that isn't always a financial possibility. However, you can now create a budget alternative using the Mac and iOS app Astropad, which turns your iPad into a de facto graphics tablet.

Astropad works by mirroring your Mac's screen on to your iPad, enabling you to use native Mac programs such as Photoshop with pressure-sensitive styluses such as the Adonit Jot Touch or Wacom Creative Stylus 2. These styluses retain the pressure sensitivity and palm-rejection features as if used with an iPad-native app, and help to replicate a Wacom-like tablet experience very closely. The degree of functionality can depend on which app you use, because not all support pressure sensitivity via Astropad.

The app connects via Lightning/USB or Wi-Fi and you can choose to replicate the whole of your Mac's screen or just a part of it. Thanks to its bespoke LIQUID technology Astropad runs at 60 frames per second,

(compared to Airplay's 30fps) and so the lag between the two screens is considerably less than with other AirPlay apps. However, there were still some slight delays in our tests with an iPad Air connected via Lightning. Artwork pixellated on screen temporarily after applying a brush stroke, while the temporary pink trail, which Astropad uses to show your

“It's a very worthwhile and exciting first step towards using the iPad as a tablet – and at a great price”

brush movement, would often end up chasing our pen point around, rather than being where we wanted it. Occasionally, it would break off and not follow the path.

We also had issues using gestures to magnify or pan and zoom, with the functionality not working in some apps and being very slow in others. We are told this will be fixed in future releases.

When using Astropad, the iPad's screen size can also be a problem.

Unlike iOS painting apps whose interfaces are designed to make the most of the smaller screen, Astropad relies on the art program's native interfaces. As such, complex software such as SketchBook Pro can be very fiddly when condensed on a 9.7-inch screen (let alone on a Mini's 7.9-inch screen!), and even with shortcuts and gestures can be quite fussy to use.

At just over £20, compared to the £1,000-plus Cintiq, Astropad is clearly not a serious competitor for Wacom. However, it's still a very worthwhile and exciting first step towards using the iPad as a tablet. As the app continues to develop and is upgraded for greater compatibility with various apps, it'll become a useful tool for digital artists. At its bargain price you should at least give it a go – download a seven-day trial version from the Astropad site.

DETAILS

Features

- Connect via USB/Lightning or Wi-Fi
- Works with pressure-sensitive styluses
- Runs at 60 frames per second
- Use native Mac programs via your iPad
- Colour matches iPad to Mac screen
- Customisable shortcuts menu
- Customise stylus shortcuts
- Heads-up display of keyboard shortcuts
- Select all or part of your Mac screen to appear on iPad
- Use gestures to navigate

System Requirements

Mac: OS X 10.8+, iOS 8.1+

Rating



The pressure disc tip enhances the stylus' accuracy.



Jot Mini stylus

STYLISH STYLUS Is this mini marvel the best smartphone stylus yet?

Price \$20

Company Adonit

Web www.adonit.net

RATING

When it comes to styluses we often fixate on degrees of pressure sensitivity and levels of accuracy to judge their worth. The new Adonit Jot Mini may not have the bells and whistles of its siblings, but it also has none of the problems of Bluetooth pairing or app compatibility.

It's super accurate, thanks to its pressure disc tip, and most importantly it's great fun to use. At less than 10cm long and a mere 13 grams, it feels more like using a piece of charcoal than a stylus. Its brushed aluminium casing is tough too, but our favourite feature is the cap you can remove then screw on to the end so you don't lose it – simple but smart!

Although it will happily work on any tablet, the Mini's natural home is on smartphones – especially larger screened models like the iPhone 6 Plus, for which it's perfect. The Mini's reduced size makes it feel much more comfortable to use on a smaller screen as you can draw with the detail you would on a tablet and aren't restricted by a cumbersome pen.

Using this small stylus on a smartphone is akin to the difference between drawing with a fineliner and a felt-tip.



The fit and finish is comparable to Wacom's Cintiq.

GT-220 tablet monitor

DOUBLE DIPPER It's a widescreen monitor. It's a tablet device. And it's cheaper than the equivalent Cintiq. We find out if it's suitable for artists

Price £549 **Company** Huion **Web** www.huion-tablet.com

Huion's latest product is a 21.5-inch widescreen monitor that, with the help of 5,000lpi (lines per inch) digitiser technology, turns its surface into a tablet you can draw and paint on using its 2,048 pressure-level stylus.

The colour temperature on the display runs on the slightly cool side, but brightness levels are good and viewing angles solid. A small speck of debris was trapped under the glass of the review unit. This defect didn't stop us from drawing on the GT-220, but marred an otherwise high build quality.

The rechargeable stylus is light in hand with a solid feel, but the lack of a dedicated eraser could prove a hindrance for some. The two side buttons can have mouse-click actions assigned to them. The battery lasted a week and a USB power cable recharges the stylus.

The USB and display connections are located at the bottom-front of the monitor, near desk level. This is an odd choice because you may crimp the cables with the adjustable stand.

The drivers make possible cursor calibration, hot-key reassignment and pressure level adjustment in Windows. Application-specific settings and fine-tuning of the pressure curve aren't offered. OS X comes out worse: there's no cursor calibration and fewer actions are assignable to the stylus buttons.

Drawing feels good in Windows. More jitter manifests during slow strokes than in Wacom's products, but fast, confident strokes render well. In applications with stroke smoothing support, you'd be hard pressed to tell the difference with a mark made on a more expensive digitiser display. Sadly, in OS X, drawing feels loose. The lack of a cursor calibration option makes for inaccurate strokes, while the pressure curve blows out to maximum quickly.

The GT-220 sells at a mid-tier price point that's cheaper than Wacom's Cintiq 13HD and Yiynova's MVP22U. If you're after a large display to draw on cheaply, it's well made and performs adequately in Windows. A purchase is harder to justify to Mac users, where the unit's pressure performance is subpar and drivers less robust.

DETAILS

Features

- 5,000lpi digitiser with 2,048 pressure levels
- 21-inch 1080p screen
- VGA, HDMI and DVI connections
- Rechargeable stylus
- Mouse-click assignments for two button stylus
- Multi-point calibration (Windows)
- Angle-adjustable, VESA-mounted stand
- WinTab and Tablet PC compatibility

System Requirements

PC: Windows XP or higher
Mac: OS 10.7 or higher

Rating

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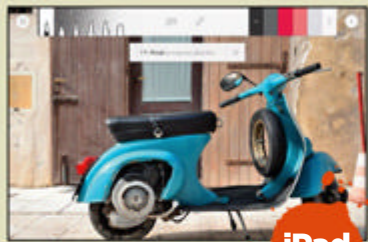
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The free version offers up to five layers a sketch; a £2.99 in-app purchase makes them unlimited.



iPad

Forge

STYLUS PRIMED Stylus firm Adonit's first app is made for sketching

Price Free, in-app purchases

Company Adonit

Web www.adonit.net

RATING

Adonit is better known for styluses than software, but lots of thought has gone into this sketching app, which is (naturally) made to be used with a stylus but works just as well with a finger.

Opening the app displays a virtual wall of projects, each like a mood board containing sketches (created from scratch or imported from your photo album or Dropbox). Sketches can be rearranged, dragged to a screen corner to transfer between projects, or exported as a PNG or PDF. Sadly, though, you can't zoom to compare sketches side by side.

In sketch mode you work freehand with pressure-sensitive pencil, pen, marker, paintbrush, airbrush or eraser. There's very little lag, and you can adjust brush size and edit colour swatches. Forge's biggest appeal, however, is layers. To alter layer opacity you drag layer thumbnails sideways – useful for tracing – and you can 'pinch' layers together to merge them and even transfer them between sketches. Brushes can interact naturally or be kept apart on separate layers.

The app gives you the chance to get ideas down and develop them quickly and intuitively. A fine start!



Individual sketches sit alongside each other in a project and can be moved around at will.

Manga Studio 5.0.5

MAC & PC

STATUS UPDATE We take a look at Smith Micro's latest additions and revisions to its comic creation tool

Price £31, or £134 for EX version **Company** Smith Micro **Web** www.smithmicro.com

Manga Studio neatly combines a powerful but user-friendly drawing package with essential comic book tools, such as the ability to plan panels and add speech bubbles. While there hasn't been a full update since our review back in issue 102, publisher Smith Micro has been delivering incremental updates.

The latest brings the software up to version 5.0.5, which is a free update if you have either the standard edition or the more expensive EX version, which has pro features that make it easier to create multiple page comic books. One of the most significant new additions is transform filters, such as pinch, fish-eye lens, wave and whirlpool. These will be familiar to users of Photoshop, and are as brilliant for creating psychedelic effects as for subtly altering objects or small parts of an image.

In the EX version the story editor can edit lines in batches rather than one at a time, so that you can get an overview of your whole story and

“The transform filters are brilliant for psychedelic effects or subtly altering objects”



keep everything flowing nicely. This is also perfect for when your writer gets back to you with a grand revision of that story you're working on. The EX version also adds common binding processes, complete with presets, for when you finally take the finished article to the printers.

Manga-specific introductions have included LT conversion of layers, which results in the familiar line and dot fill of the artform while preserving finer details in backgrounds. This works with both 2D backgrounds and those created using the 3D tools in Manga Studio 5, and it can be used with images imported from your computer. Finally, font previews make it easy to choose the right typefaces for the job.

The learning curve is a little too steep if you're coming from Photoshop, and getting it to run full-screen is a faff. But this is a singular piece of software, and we're eager for the next instalment.

Takuya Rawr's Divinity proves that Manga Studio isn't just for creating line art.

DETAILS

Features

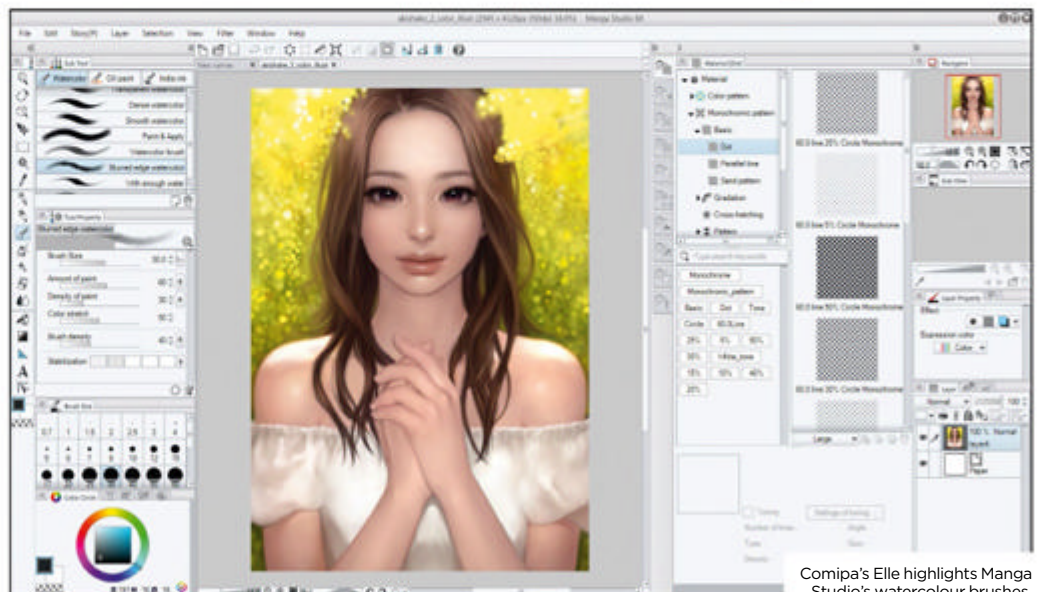
- Story editor
- Binding process settings
- Gradation map
- Transform filters
- LT conversion of layer
- Line extraction
- Gradient tone
- Saturated line and stream line sub-tools
- Watercolour borders
- Font preview

System Requirements

PC: Windows 8 or 8.1, 7, Vista or XP (but not 64-bit); 2GHz Intel Pentium 4 or equivalent; 2GB RAM; 2GB free hard disk space; graphics card with 256MB or more VRAM

Mac: OS X 10.6 or newer; Intel Core 2 Duo minimum; 2GB free hard disk space; graphics card with 256MB or more VRAM

Rating



Comipa's Elle highlights Manga Studio's watercolour brushes.

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If you find the prospect of drawing a full head shot intimidating, Patrick J Jones explains how to build the forms up from simple shapes.



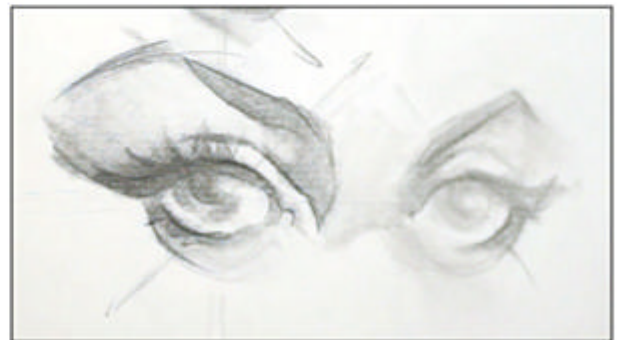
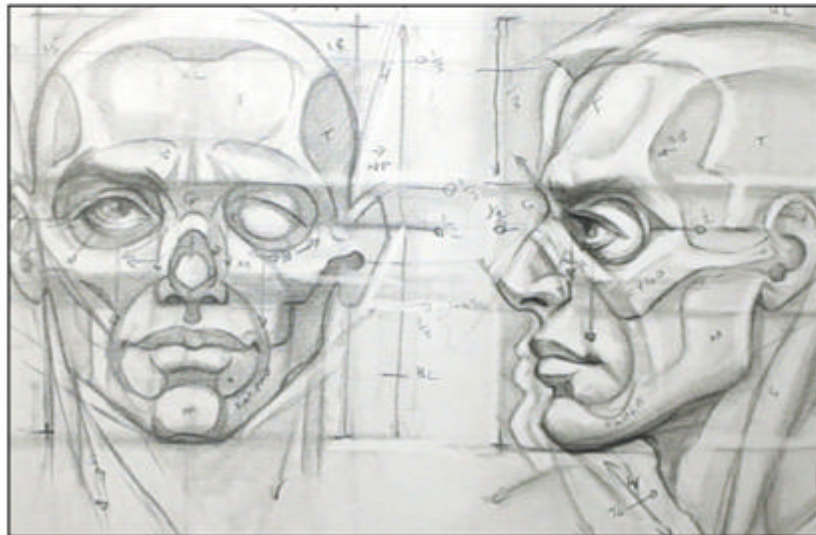
Patrick shows how you can build up a detailed side-profile, in his second Anatomy of the Head video.



As the drawing evolves, understanding the relationship of different planes and angles becomes important.



In a brief detour from his main head drawing, Patrick looks at how certain style decisions can make eyes look more feminine.



Anatomy of the Head Part 2

USE YOUR NOGGIN Discover the basics of anatomy as artist Patrick J Jones helps you draw heads with confidence and style

Publisher Patrick J Jones **Price** £7 **Format** Download **Web** www.pjartworks.com

Patrick J Jones has steadily built up a library of art video training that's become required viewing. 2014's series on the making of his *Conan The Conquered* piece discusses the craft of oil painting in exhaustive detail, for example. Now he's put together a new series, in which he aims to offer a comprehensive guide to anatomy.

Patrick takes it from the top – literally – with advice on drawing the human head. This instalment from his series focuses on the side-profile view, an angle that many artists learning the ropes find difficult. You'll see how to start with basic shapes and simple measurements, then pinpoint critical anatomical parts to add forms until you have a finished head.

As usual with Patrick, there's plenty of extra value to be found in his discussion of topics beyond the core subject. You'll pick up plenty of pencil-drawing techniques, such as simple



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Construction
- Proportions
- Planes of the head
- Simplifying the skeleton
- Using erasers
- Blending methods
- Drawing with style
- Male and female eyes

Length

64 minutes

Rating



tools to help you erase without damaging the paper or achieve smooth gradations in tones, or the skills of holding the pencil in different ways to achieve loose gestures or tight details.

As Patrick is at pains to point out, there are many other sources of information for learning head anatomy, from sketches by Leonardo da Vinci to the classic instructional books by Andrew Loomis. Every artist today stands on the shoulders of the creative giants who have been researching, transcribing and teaching this knowledge for centuries.

What makes Patrick's version notable is that you get to see the progression of the drawing, from the most basic lines to refinement of angles and shapes. Studying from a video rather than books shows you how even the most complex rendering starts with simple foundations, and will help you to build the confidence to reach a similar standard to Patrick's accomplished drawings.

ARTIST PROFILE

PATRICK J JONES

Patrick was born in Belfast. He became inspired to take up art by the fantasy work of Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta, and moved to London – the first step on a path that would see him travel the world as an illustrator and artist. He's worked for most major science fiction and fantasy book publishers, and film companies, painting covers for authors including Simon R Green, Mary Shelley and Bram Stoker. His painting *Conan The Conquered* was the winner of 2014's IBA Grand Jury Prize.



www.pjartworks.com



William Blake: The Drawings for Dante's Divine Comedy

BAD TRIP The maddest journey in world literature, as seen through the eyes of a dying obsessive and a great artist, is given new exposure in this handsome tome

Authors Sebastian Schütze and Maria Antonietta Terzoli **Publisher** Taschen **Price** £100 **Web** www.taschen.com **Available Now**

Taschen often produces art books so huge, you need a donkey to get them home. Luckily this reproduction of the sketchbooks of English polymath William Blake won't invoke hernias. It has just the right heft and texture to recreate the sensation of having found the materials next to Blake's bedside, where they were when he died in 1827.

This is a celebration of the life's obsession of two men, and Sebastian Schütze's opening essay on *The Divine Comedy* is a perfectly pitched introduction to the artwork that follows. However, Dante's epic poem isn't actually part of the deal, making this an accompaniment to your chosen translation, rather than what you could call the complete package. Nonetheless, anyone unfamiliar with



Dante's text will surely know many of its core features, so influential has the work been on visions of the afterlife.

What this publication is, however, is an inspiration to anybody with the slightest desire to pick up a pen, pencil, or any drawing utensil, and leave their artistic mark. This is due to the attainable ordinariness evident on every page, the sheer scrappiness that leaves the reading artist confident they can create something better. Not that each drawing – immaculately recreated on textured paper, often on expanded fold-out pages – is anything less than engrossing; but somehow this intimate arrangement puts you in Blake's shoes (or rather, his bed) and leaves you feeling empowered, convinced that there's no impossible mystery to artistic greatness – Blake shows that it's largely effort and imagination that counts.

Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise comes from a civilisation totally alien to us: it's a tale written as a direct extrapolation of solid belief and heartfelt morality that now seems so naïve as to be impossible to take seriously. It's the original bad trip, the inspiration for *Alice in Wonderland* or *Yellow Submarine*, except less believable and less relevant to real life than those



Dante stands before the entrance to Hell, in one of over 100 large (34x24cm) images from the book.



Blake's depiction of The Circle of the Lustful, part of Hell's upper tiers.

trippy adventures. But even the most amused atheist has to thank Dante for inspiring so many great artists, and this collection – comprising not just the complete Blake sketches, but the cream of Dante illustrations – is well worth the journey. Maybe it's not to die for, though.

RATING

Velázquez: The Complete Works

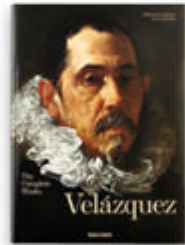
LIVING GHOSTS The Spanish master managed to bottle the very breath of everyone from King to Commoner: this collection keeps them alive



Authors José López-Rey and Odile Delenda **Publisher** Taschen **Price** £100 **Web** www.taschen.com **Available** Now

The portraits of Spanish master Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velázquez (1599-1660) will come as a revelation to the uninitiated. A major influence on the likes of Picasso and Bacon, his paintings cross all boundaries of class, ranging from royal portraits to images of workers smiling and drinking, thumbs aloft, for all the world as if they lived next door rather than Renaissance Spain.

This heavy-duty collection may not be the perfect format for experiencing



Velázquez's career in full: it's text-heavy and academic enough to appeal largely to art history graduates, slightly at odds with the open, human qualities of the art itself. The power of many pictures is undermined by zoomed-in elements on the pages preceding the full image, and you're left feeling that a wordless virtual stroll through a Velázquez exhibition would tell you more than a million words ever could.

But above all, this collection should be inspiring for any true artist: the fidelity of the reproduction shows every rough brush-stroke and scribbled detail before pulling out to show the overall effect of uncannily lifelike portraiture, humanity stopped in time and captured on canvas forever. This is how it's done.

RATING 5/5



Velázquez painted plenty of noble folk in equestrian mode, such as Count-Duke of Olivares on Horseback.

The Squickerwonkers

PUPPET PLAY This is the first in an illustrated darkly poetic series from the Hobbit and Lost star, but one which may not be worth following...

Author Evangeline Lilly **Artist** Johnny Fraser-Allen **Publisher** Titan **Price** £13 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Yes indeed, that is Evangeline Lilly of Lost and The Hobbit fame, and this poetic pilot of a book is something of a Hobbit creative team spin-off – as well as further evidence that celebrity is a more crucial qualification for writing for children than natural ability.

We're taking a look at The Squickerwonkers above all, of course, for its illustrations and design, so it's crucial to the proceedings that

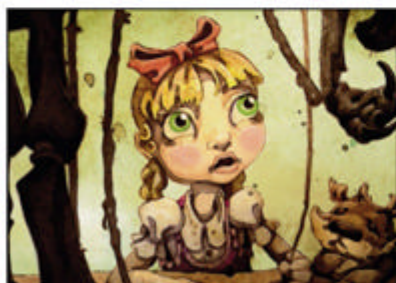


illustrator and Weta Workshop sculptor Johnny Fraser-Allen gets equal billing, because with the very best will in the very best world, Lilly's concept and text have no real place on bookshelves. This taster story of a spoiled child who gets sucked into the world of a gang of oddball puppets is very briefly told in a handful of near-limerick stanzas with indifferent scansion and nothing much to suggest it's publishable. It feels tough

to admit this with the likes of Peter Jackson singing the project's praises in his intro, but sadly even the quirky visuals don't turn The Squickerwonkers into anything special, leaving us with a pretty blatant vanity project.

The Hobbit links should, however, mean that it is the first of a series, whether we like it or not.

RATING 2/5



Clever but spoilt Selma loses her temper with the motley gang of Squickerwonkers. What will become of her?

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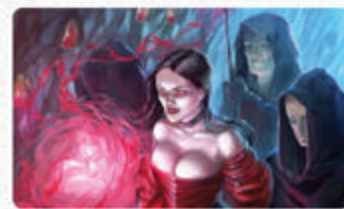
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PRESENTS



FANTASY

illustrator

This issue:



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The best traditional art revealed.



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DISCOVER HOW TO
**PAINT WITH
ACRYLIC WASHES**

Craww builds colour and depth using layers of watered-down acrylic paint **Page 106**

FXPosé Traditional

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Alexandra Petruk

LOCATION: Russia

WEB: <http://ifxm.ag/apetruk>

EMAIL: alex-petruk@yandex.ru

MEDIA: Acrylic



After experimenting with art in her university years, Alexandra decided not to become an English language teacher, for which she was qualified, but to pursue her dream in illustration instead.

Getting acquainted with video games further inspired the Russian artist, who likes to take cues from storytelling. Alexandra worked purely in traditional media until fairly recently when she got roped into digital art by a local team of casual gamers.

"As a freelancer I have time to illustrate my own fantasies," she says, "and often do so with acrylic, especially when my eyes are tired from a long time at the monitor."

Alexandra remains modest about her work, lamenting that she never studied anatomy, perspective and composition. She draws every day, without fail.



1 SAILING

Acrylic, 7x5in

"I was listening to Mike Oldfield's old albums, regretting he hadn't created anything new for a long time. I decided to look for news about him and found he had released a new album, Man on The Rocks, and there was a new song called Sailing. When I heard this song, I was surprised how much it was about this little red man I had depicted on my painting. So here he is - sailing, singing: 'Let me out. I can't breathe. Gotta get out of this concrete hole.'"

2 PET

Acrylic, 8x7in

"I created this illustration rather quickly. I was inspired by the classic theme of Beauty and the Beast and decided to make it more sensual or sexual. You can even see the stains of paint on the background - I hurried to express my feelings and forgot about accuracy."

3 JEALOUSY

Acrylic, 42x56in

"I wanted to create something epic and mysterious and ended up drawing this story of a powerful bloodthirsty witch who found that the object of her desire (a handsome prince maybe) was in love with someone else. Sometimes when I draw, I realise stories are even more important to me than images and this artwork is a good example."





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Alexandra's art certainly has a way of catching the viewer's attention – and possibly causing me to have nightmares tonight! Her use of both colour and lighting shows skill, too."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

+ Ulla Thynell

LOCATION: Finland

WEB: www.ullathynell.com

EMAIL: ulla.thynell@gmail.com

MEDIA: Watercolour, pencil, ink, markers, acrylic



"Art has always been an essential part of my life" says Ulla. But it took her until the age of 29 to pluck up the courage to quit her day job and become an illustrator full-time. Yet within a year she was published in a children's book.

"What I most enjoy in making art is visualising compelling or dreamy atmospheres. My art is often seen as storybookish or naïve, because I'm not very serious about realism. I'm much more interested in colour, texture and obscure detail," she says.

"I intend my art to convey a story as well as emotion. With images I find it's possible to create complex messages and feelings that are open to subjective interpretation."



1 ELVISH FEAST IN MIRKWOOD

Watercolour and ink, 19x13in

"This is based on *The Hobbit*, where Bilbo and the dwarves see glimpses of a feast – but the lights disappear whenever they approach. I love the contrast between the gaiety of the elves and desperation of the dwarves."

2 FINDING

Watercolour, markers, pencil, 13x17in

"This was inspired by spring and the comforting yet adventurous feeling of summer approaching. This is all about finding warm things: fluffy critters, safe hideaways, friendship! I always find I'm inspired by nature."

3 FANGORN

Watercolour, markers, ink and pencil, 14x19in

"Based on *The Two Towers*, where Merry and Pippin visit Treebeard's home and share stories. Something about the peaceful and otherworldly atmosphere inspired me."



SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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(maximum 1MB per image)

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Bath BA1 1UA, UK

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IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Naturally we're big Tolkien fans, but so are most people and there's plenty of Lord of the Rings-inspired art around. Ulla, however, has brought something fresh, honest and playful to the genre."

Claire Howlett,
Editor

Creative Space



HEY YOU!
Are you a part of
a regular art class or
group? Email us at
mail@imaginefx.com
if you want to
feature here!

ENDOFTHELINE

In Shoreditch, east London, a creative powerhouse strives to bring a unique urban vision to its art projects, as **MATILDA TICKNER-DU** and **TAMARA ELHAJ** explain...

EndoftheLine describes itself as a “contemporary creative collective” and runs underground art events, from paint jams to comic book launches and life-drawing classes. The group, led by Jim Vision (the founder and creative director) and Matilda Tickner-Du, works out of Rockwell House, a former 1960s warehouse in east London, but are soon to be on the move.

“We aim to bring artists together, and are excited to be moving to a larger, even better space,” says Matilda, the group’s co-director.



“Our main focus has been live-painting events where visitors can observe different artists from the EndoftheLine network painting alongside more

established illustrators such as Simon Bisley, James O’Barr and Rufus Dayglo.”

Tamara Elhaj, head of communication at EndoftheLine, says, “The space itself has led much of what we do, but we’re driven by a desire to curate groundbreaking events within any venue, be it an old warehouse, rooftop, backstreet, arch, or event vacant wasteland. We’re essentially curating unexpected events in unexpected spaces.



“Live painting both at our venue and on the street provides people with a unique insight into the painting process. These are a very relaxed setup for the artists within our network to paint live and for the public to witness the full process,” continues Tamara. “Open-air space has enabled us to host artists



EndoftheLine’s current establishment, Rockwell House, is adorned with art by Jim Vision and El Mac.

working in mixed media from spray paint to brush, pens, charcoal and even painting with flame.”

The collective is a blend of amateur and professional, nurturing support and growth of all artists. Tamara explains that, “We understand the importance of continually developing drawing skills and furthering creativity.”

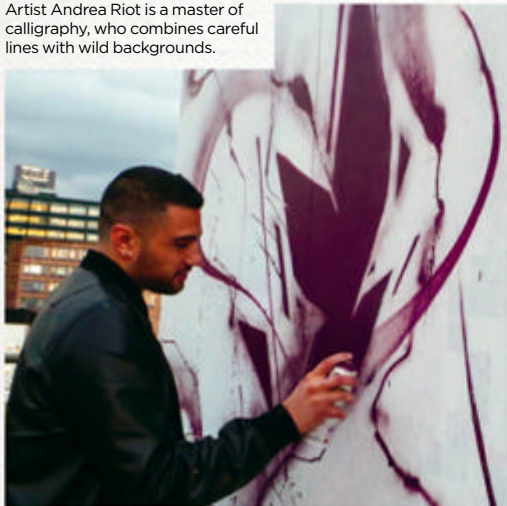
EndoftheLine’s new open-air space will be a yard and warehouse three times the size of the original space, giving the team the chance to put on even more events. “We’re looking to future concepts that bring together the creative community under one huge warehouse roof!” enthuses Tamara.

For more information follow the group on Twitter, @EndoftheLineLDN, or visit the website at www.endoftheline.co.

DrZadok & EndoftheLine founder Jim Vision painting live for the DVD launch of Mark Millar's Kick-Ass 2.



Artist Andrea Riot is a master of calligraphy, who combines careful lines with wild backgrounds.



2000 AD and Tank Girl artist Rufus Dayglo is a huge supporter and has featured at many live events.



2000 AD artist Siku, illustrator and tattoo artist Alex Young, and Gent48 painting on the rooftop for the 13 Coins comic launch.

LINE 'EM UP!

EndoftheLine's live shows produce a range of striking urban artworks...



James O'Barr's art from one of the First Thursday show, centred around The Crow.



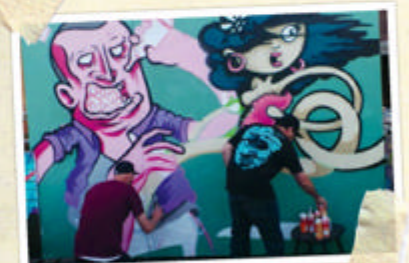
Brazilian artists Rodrigo Bronco and Saki talk shop at the Meeting of Styles event.



Crush Proof paints a wall mural at the second Gathering of The Clans gathering.



Alex Young pictured with an event guest in front of his piece at the 13 Coins event.



Captain Kris and Rick Dep give the boards at Rockwell House a fresh coat of paint.

Workshops



GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Acrylics

PAINTING WITH ACRYLIC WASHES

CRAWW demonstrates his technique for building colour and depth using multiple layers of acrylic wash, which can bring stunning results

While I work in a variety of mediums including just about everything from graphite and ink to charcoal and oils, I enjoy the flexibility of acrylics: they can be used direct from the tube to create thick dense colour or, as we'll do here, watered down and layered to give depth and an almost ethereal quality to light.

I'm currently focussed on a body of work for a show later in the year at Antler Gallery in Portland, and this painting is part of that.

Living in the countryside I constantly find myself inspired by natural forms – as much by death, bones and decay as pretty flowers and cute animals. My work embraces these themes, exploring the beauty to be found in the complete cycle of birth, death, growth and decay. Melancholic but romantic.

As well as a focus on nature, I enjoy using heavily stylised female figurative imagery, often with a focus on the hands. I use a variety of reference material, from

fashion magazines and websites through to working with live models, but I find that the imagery becomes my own only when I'm able to tap into an emotive or expressive quality. My method of painting and my interpretation of forms, the exaggerated hands and the stylised figures enable me to do this.

As a self-taught artist, it's a style of painting that I have developed over the past few years, and I've learned a few tricks and techniques that make it work for me. My process is very much a stream-of-consciousness flow. I seldom start with a clear idea but really enjoy seeing how my work almost takes on a life of its own, growing from absent-minded doodles, through development in my sketchbook to painting the finished piece.

I try to embrace a spontaneity in my work, and the drips and splashes of watered-down acrylic lend themselves well to that process – even accidents that seem disastrous at the time. Let me take you through my process of painting when working with acrylic paints.

ARTIST INSIGHT

GENTLY DOES IT

Working with paper and washes needs a gentle touch, especially when transferring the drawing. Don't overwork the drawing – continual erasing will roughen the surface and cause potential blemishes further down the line. I use a putty rubber and roll it over areas, lifting rather than erasing mistakes.



Craww is a fine artist and illustrator working in Sheffield, England. A habitual doodler, his work embraces a variety of mediums including graphite, acrylics and oil painting. He has enjoyed successful shows in London, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

www.craww.com



MATERIALS

PAPER:

■ 760x560mm 280gsm
deckle-edged BFK
Rives paper

PENCILS:

■ Uni Kuru Togi .5mm
2B mechanical pencil
■ 8B Koh-I-Noor
graphite stick
■ Winsor & Newton
putty rubber

WINSOR & NEWTON BRUSHES:

■ Extra large mop
brush
■ 22 Galeria short flat
■ 8 Galeria filbert
■ 2 Galeria filbert
■ 4 Galeria round
■ 2 Galeria round
■ 1 Galeria round

WINSOR & NEWTON PAINTS:

■ Perylene green
■ Hookers green
■ Phthalo turquoise
■ Alizarin crimson
■ Quinacridone burnt
orange
■ Yellow ochre
■ Buff titanium

DALER ROWNEY CRYLA ARTISTS ACRYLIC:

■ Prussian blue hue
■ Titanium white



1 Sketchbooks and ideas

My work always starts in the sketchbook. It's a risk-free environment to explore ideas and hopefully surprise yourself. I'm a constant doodler and I try and keep things as loose as possible throughout this stage, allowing for room to explore the idea as it progresses.



2 Transfer the drawing

I prefer to redraw rather than transfer my sketch using a light box or projector. It takes longer but retains the spontaneity, and again enable the idea to develop. I probably spend too long on this stage, but it does help me get a feel for the piece and also acts as an underpainting.



3 Preparing for the initial wash

Using a mop brush, I cover the entire surface with clean water, preparing it for the initial wash. Then I mix up the initial colour. I mix a lot of paint, in this case Prussian blue, Hookers green and a touch of Phthalo turquoise, which gives the colour a little more depth, using a lot of water to thin it down.

4 Applying the first wash

Again using my mop brush, I load it with a lot of paint and wash it onto the wet paper, working across the paper and allowing the water to carry the paint down the painting. Things can look a little messy at this stage, but I enjoy the spontaneity, seeing how the paint goes down, and it will be worked on and refined later.



ARTIST INSIGHT

DON'T BE AFRAID OF BIG BRUSHES

I use my mop brush a lot, for large areas but also for smaller areas. Loaded with paint, the brush can be shaped and used to apply paint in smaller areas too. I like the spontaneity and surprises that occur when I'm not obsessing an area with a small brush.

5 Working with the wash

While it's still wet, I start to work into it, getting a feel for highlights by lifting paint off with a clean/dry mop brush. I also use a water spray from a garden centre to wash areas if I want to blend paint or remove it altogether.

6 Building colour and tone

I repeat this process, gradually building layers of colour. Each layer is a very slight development on the last, creating denser colour and tone. As the process continues I can refine areas more. When I want to create a harder edge I will paint an area with water first and then apply the wash, letting the paint run into the water and along the edge.

PENCIL TIP

TOOL CHOICE

I use a .5 mechanical pencil to draw a light outline, and an 8B Koh-I-Noor graphite stick for bolder lines and areas.



7 *Blending colour*

Working wet on wet produces subtle blends. I enjoy the softness this gives, but if I want to stop the paint running into an area I'll use a hair dryer to dry areas as I'm working. I don't worry about the drips – they're part of the fun – but if they do interfere with something I will lift them with the brush or wash them off with the water spray.



8 Adding detail

Now that I'm happy with how the washes are progressing, I want to give the painting some form. I've aimed for an overall mid-tone at this stage and now I'll work with a denser mix of paint, using a selection of long-handled brushes to start to establish darker areas, enhance contrast and bring out key forms and shapes.

9 Adding colour

Up until this point I've been working on tone and form. Now I want to add colour. Still working with thin washes, first I add a mix of Yellow ochre, muted with Buff titanium, to the figures. At this stage I'm not worried about the final hues – I'm just laying down a ground colour.

PAPER TIP

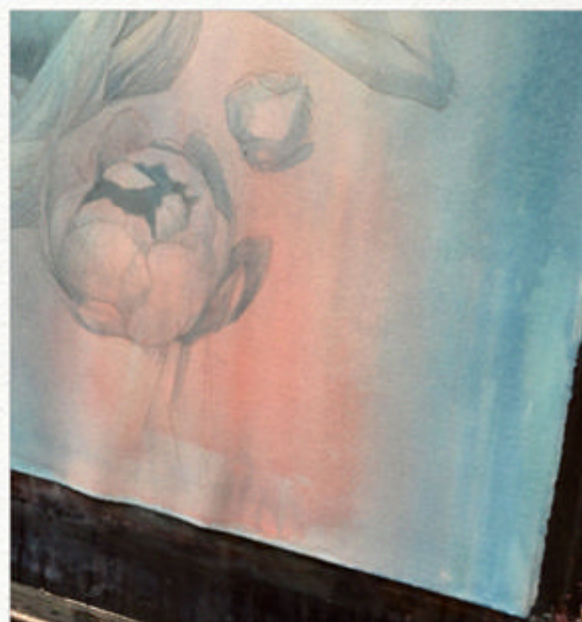
THE RIGHT PAPER

With acrylic washes I use BFK Rives paper, a beautiful, soft, almost fabric-like surface that never buckles when wet.



10 Keeping it loose

I then add a wash of Alizarin crimson mixed with Quinacridone burnt orange to the flowers area. I'm not painting the flowers as such, rather adding colour areas that I can play with later. It's also worth noting that however strong the colour looks when you first apply it, it'll be a lot paler once it dries.



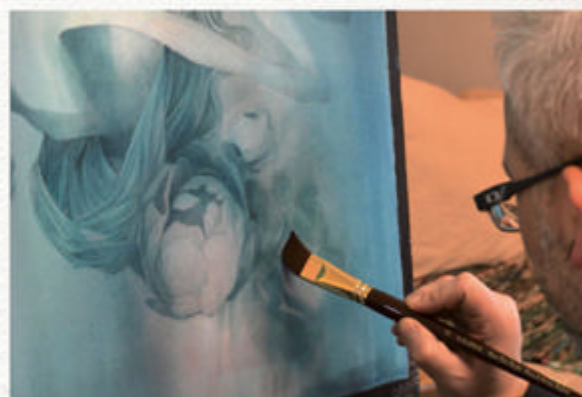
ARTIST INSIGHT WALK AWAY FROM IT

Sometimes it's easy to get too close to a painting, obsessing over perceived mistakes and errors. Come back to the painting the next day with a fresh pair of eyes – sometimes what you thought was a mistake is what gives a painting its character, a happy accident adding interest and depth.



11 Layering washes

From now on it's really a matter of repeating the process, alternating between gradually building colour and tone with additional washes and working on areas of detail. It's at this stage that the painting starts to gain its depth. Colours become deeper, shadows grow darker, and detail and form are more defined.



12 Evaluation of the painting

I continue to step back and evaluate. I aim to create a flow through the piece, but the composition seems to be missing something to lead the eye out, so I'm adding detail to the bottom corner. I shape it with a long-handled flat brush but purposefully keep it looser than the more defined flowers – this will create depth, helping to foreground detail.



13 Working on detail

Now I'm able to focus on the detail. I tend to move from my easel to a flat surface. I like to be "over" my painting at this stage. It's now that the painting starts to come to life, as I'm able to focus on the fine details that create character.



14 Refining the work

It's time to revisit areas to which I've previously applied rough colour. I'm now able to go in and work on them, adding refinement, detail and depth.



15 Appraise and finalise

The final stage is to step back again and look for any areas that need tightening up and any opportunities for additional detail to add narrative to the painting. Here I feel that some thin bones would add context to the bird skull.

Photography

PHOTOGRAPHING ARTWORK FOR REPRO

In the third part of his series, **DAVID PALUMBO** describes his photo process for delivery to clients. It's convenient and low cost without compromising quality

Essentially, this set-up could be called the "long exposure available light" method. I like it because of its simplicity: what you actually see is what you'll get, so it's achievable with basic equipment. In fact, that's the core idea behind this approach and one of the most important concepts to understand if you're going to use it successfully: if you can get the painting to look right to your eye from standing in one specific spot, you can photograph it.

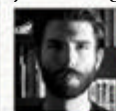
This method is also very accessible because the tools required are cheap and easy to find. A camera and tripod are the only photo-specific tools needed, and both can be found second-hand for bargain prices. You'll need a camera with at least 12 megapixels, and more is generally better. I also recommend using a camera that gives you full manual control and is capable of capturing Raw files. If your camera has interchangeable lenses, you'll get less glare with a portrait length lens than a wide lens.

MATERIALS

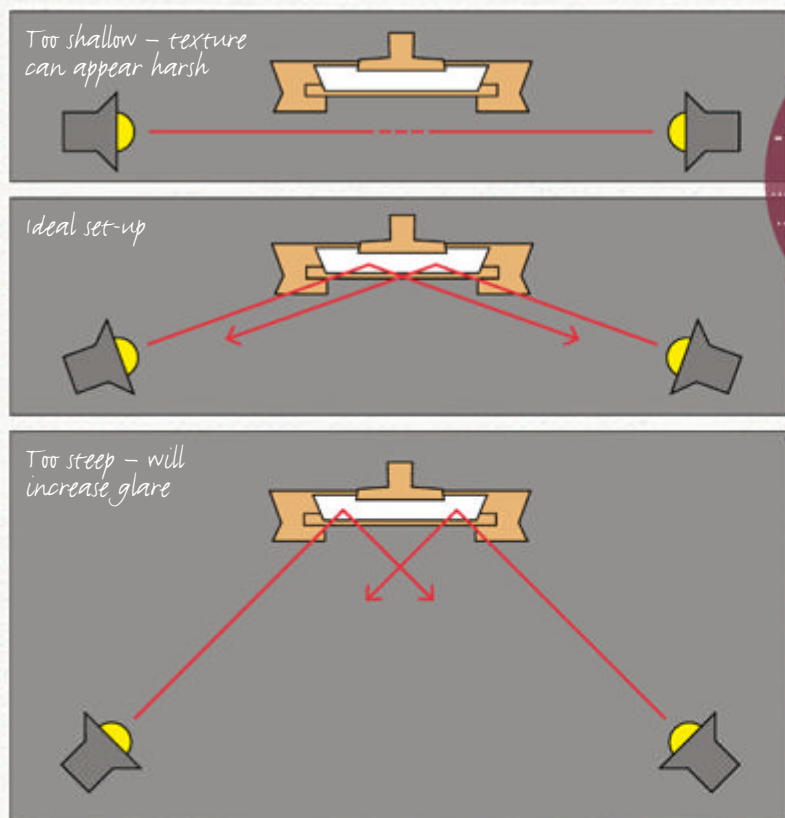
- Camera
- Tripod
- Lamps
- Adobe Lightroom
- Photoshop

**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**
See page 6 now!

Three components of photography must be balanced to produce a proper exposure: shutter speed, aperture (f-stop) and ISO. See step 2 for ideal settings on a D-SLR. You may want to experiment and vary these settings to find the best results for your own equipment, particularly if you're using a compact camera.



David is an award-winning illustrator and fine artist who works primarily in genre fiction and fantasy gaming. See his work at www.dvpalumbo.com.



1 Setting the lights

I use two floor lamps, each fitted with three daylight-balanced 75W bulbs. The light should be even on both sides and rake the surface at a shallow angle, likely about 20-30 degrees. An angle that's too shallow exaggerates textures and one too steep will produce more glare.

SHOOT RAW

MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY
Shooting in Raw file format allows maximum control over colour, exposure and export size.

Aperture fully opened

Middle aperture setting

Aperture closed too far will lose detail to diffraction



ARTIST INSIGHT

BLACK SHEET

Some highly reflective paintings will tend to show excessive room reflections. Shooting from further back helps reduce this, but you can also hang a large black sheet behind the camera when needed.

2 Ideal camera settings

Keeping the ISO low will give you clean shots without an excess of grainy artifacts. ISO 100 to 200 is ideal. Each lens is different, but an aperture in the middle range (f8 or f11 typically) gives the sharpest results. Allow the camera to determine shutter speed by shooting in Aperture Priority mode.



3 Placing the camera

Mount the camera on a tripod and disable any image stabilisation features. A portrait/telephoto lens will reduce glare and room reflections. Place a white card next to the painting for white balance. Use the two-second timer to prevent you shaking the camera when pressing the shutter.



4 Raw processing in Lightroom

It takes just a few clicks to correct white balance (click the white card with the Eyedropper), auto-correct lens distortion (under Lens Correction, enable Profile Corrections), tweak exposure and contrast, and add sharpening. Raw files can also be upsized when exporting, with surprisingly clean results.



5 Final touches in Photoshop

What remains for Photoshop is just cropping, fine-tuning the levels, and removing stray specular highlights with the Healing Brush. I'll often use Transform>Distort to correct any distortion that may have occurred from shooting at a slightly off angle. If you do this, always resize the image to the correct proportions afterwards.

First Impressions

✧ Terryl Whitlatch ✧

The creature artist tells us why animals have always been part of her life



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?

I grew up in northern California and the Florida Panhandle, which are both wonderful places to be exposed to animals and nature.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your work?

It's actual animals – both existing and prehistoric – above all that have influenced my art. I've always wanted to understand them and to draw them well. They are my first love as far as subject matter goes, much more than doing imaginary creatures.

What paintings or drawings inspired you as a child?

The way Bob Kuhn captured accuracy and movement of an animal was spot on, and I wanted to be able to do that, too. I wanted to understand the muscles and sinews that Jay Matternes drew in his prehistoric mammal murals for the Smithsonian Institution. I was also entranced by Dr. Seuss: his free-wheeling imagination would inspire me to take real animals and their imaginary offspring, and have them do very interesting things!

Can you name one person who helped you on your way?

It was a wonderful day when Gene Christman, the senior scientific illustrator at the University of California at Berkeley, came to my high school. He showed that I could do animal art for a living – scientific illustration – and my path was set.

What was your next step in art?

My interest in art was always intertwined with my interest in zoology, animals and horses. I studied hard in school because I wanted to be accepted into the zoology programs at college. Most of my art



NEBULA

Terryl thinks that, "There's a lot of fantasy art out there, at all levels of skill. What worries me is that much of it looks alike, and melds into each other."

education is self-taught. It helped that my father was a biologist who taught high school biology and chemistry, and that my mother was an illustrator. She just demonstrated the basics, and then left me to dabble on my own.

What was your first paid commission?

I was 15 and I had won third prize in a high school art competition. It was a pen

“I'd be delighted if I taught someone to love and appreciate real animals”



THE HIPPO GOD

Terryl was entranced by the swamps and springs of northwestern Florida during her growing-up years.

and ink drawing of a humorous pig, and I sold it to an adult who admired it. I was so excited that a grown-up would pay good money for my work!

What's the last piece that you finished, and how do the two differ?

It's an illustration for my upcoming book *Bestiary* (Titan Books): a group of magical Kitsune foxes from Japanese mythology. The main difference between that funny pig is that the foxes are done much more loosely while still retaining accuracy, while the pig was drawn more tightly. But that's pretty typical of artistic growth: more youthful work focuses in on the details, while more mature work focuses on the basics of form and light.

Is your art evolving?

My art is going into a more experimental, decorative direction, where I'm combining realism with abstracts and linear design, as in *Art Nouveau* and *Art Deco*. It's a great way to tell a story and symbolically get a point across. My focus is going increasingly toward symbolic and decorative directions, as in Klimt and Mucha. I'm also learning more digital techniques, and combining them with traditional media.

What's the most important thing that you've taught someone?

I'm still learning myself, but I'd be delighted if I taught someone to love and appreciate real animals. I also hope that I've inspired others to persevere no matter what the circumstances of life they find themselves in. To not be afraid of messing up, and to take courage and journey on. Courage is persevering even when one is discouraged. I know that my mistakes are my best teachers.

What advice would you give to your younger self?

Practice makes better, and you will grow if you keep on creating.

Why is the fantasy art industry still the best place to be working?

Because, in spite of the hard work involved, what other profession requires your imagination to have such wings, and to soar everyday?!

*Terryl has drawn real and imaginary animals for films including *The Phantom Menace* and *Jumanji*. www.talesofamalthaea.com*

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[†] World Forest Resources, 1953 and UN FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2010

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